

Do You Have Questions About the **COVID-19 Vaccine?**

We have collected a list of some of the most frequently asked questions, and misconceptions, from those about to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Don't see your question listed? Visit www.phila.gov/covid-19 or www.phila.gov/vaccine or call **215-685-5488** or **311** for more information.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines are medicines that help your immune (defense) system fight the COVID-19 virus. The vaccine may be one or two injections depending on the brand.

The vaccine trains your body's immune (defense) system to recognize the COVID-19 virus. This training makes it harder for the COVID-19 virus to get you sick.

Can I get COVID-19 after getting vaccinated?

Although it's possible to become infected with COVID-19 after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, you are much less likely to become seriously ill if you are fully vaccinated. The vaccines are very good at training your body to fight the COVID-19 virus, but no vaccine is perfect and there is a very small chance that you could still get the COVID-19 virus. Scientists are continuing to study how long vaccine protection lasts and if extra doses of vaccine will be needed in the future.

I had COVID-19. Why do I need the vaccine?

You should get a COVID-19 vaccine regardless of whether you already had the COVID-19 virus. Medical experts are still learning how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19 disease. Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19.

Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I still have to wear a mask?

In general, we still need to be cautious until most people have received the vaccine and the virus stops spreading. As we build the level of vaccination nationwide, we must also use all the prevention tools available, including masking, physical distancing, and choosing outdoor spaces when possible to prevent transmission. Please continue to follow guidance on masking where it is required.

I'm healthy. Why do I need the vaccine?

Not getting vaccinated puts you at much higher risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms, which can make you seriously sick for a long period of time and possibly cause lasting damage—even if you're young and healthy. Most people who are becoming very ill or hospitalized because of COVID-19 now are younger people who are not vaccinated. We're still learning about the COVID-19 virus, so it's impossible to predict whether you'll have a mild or serious illness if you are exposed.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe if it was developed so quickly?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines were developed so quickly because scientists had access to almost unlimited funds, resources, and public support. No safety regulations were cut during the development of the COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines use existing technology and research. And scientists across the world worked together to find a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus, allowing for its quick, life-saving development.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for me?

The COVID-19 virus could affect anyone, and the COVID-19 vaccine trials included participants of all different backgrounds to reflect that. In both Pfizer and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine trials over 35% of all participants were people of color. The clinical trials also included people with various chronic health conditions. No significant adverse effects were found in any of the trials.

Are the side effects dangerous?

No. You may experience some side effects including a sore arm, tiredness, headache, muscle aches, fever or chills, which are normal signs that your body is building protection (immunity). Side effects should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects at all. Experiencing side effects after receiving your vaccine are normal and do not mean the vaccine has given you COVID-19.

What about allergies and adverse reactions?

Serious adverse reactions and allergies to the COVID-19 vaccines are extremely rare. Medical providers will require you to wait in observation 15-30 minutes after receiving your vaccine to make sure no allergic or adverse reaction occurs. Please inform the staff at the vaccination site if you have a history of allergic reactions to injectable medicines before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

Where do I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

You can make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment with your doctor, local health center, nearby pharmacy or a community health organization, or walk into a vaccine clinic. COVID-19 vaccines are free and you don't need health insurance to get one!

