# COVID-19 VACCINE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As the situation around COVID-19 changes, we'll update this document to keep you informed. The contents of this document are based on information from the CDC, Oregon Health Authority and Washington Department of Health.
*Updated 3/18/21*

## SCHEDULING OF VACCINES

**Q: When am I able to get the vaccine?** ***Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** It depends on what category you are in and what state you live in. Plans created by the Oregon Health Authority and Washington Department of Health prioritize those most at risk and hardest hit by the pandemic. There will be multiple phases to the rollout of the vaccine; each state has different phases and groupings.

For the most current eligibility information visit each state's website. Note: Information is always subject to change:
Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
Washington Department of Health (WDOH)

**Q: What's the latest from Clark County in Washington regarding vaccine distribution?** ***Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** Clark County Public Health (CCPH) accepts requests for COVID-19 vaccinations for those who are eligible. All requests for the vaccine must be made through a webform on the Public Health website. CCPH is connecting eligible people to local health care facilities with COVID-19 vaccine.

**Q: I heard that in Portland they are opening a super-site for vaccines. Where and when can I sign up for a vaccine?** ***Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** Legacy Health, Kaiser Permanente, OHSU, and Providence have partnered to create a mass vaccination site at the Oregon Convention Center (OCC). Vaccinels at this site are by appointment only.

There is also a drive-through site for vaccines at the Portland International Airport. This location is also by appointment only.

To find out about vaccine eligibility and how to schedule an appointment for both the convention center and the drive-through go to https://covidvaccine.oregon.gov and click on the "Let's get started" button.

LEGACY HEALTH

**Q:** **NEW Where do I go to get a vaccine if I don't live in the Portland metro area?**
**A:** Go to your county's health department web page. Each county is managing its vaccine distribution differently and setting up the process and locations to receive vaccines differently.

If you live in Marion County, Legacy helps run a vaccine clinic at Legacy Woodburn Health Center. This is an appointment-only vaccine clinic. To find out eligibility at this clinic and to schedule an appointment, go to the OHA website and click on the "Let's get started" button.

**Q:** **NEW Can caregivers get vaccinated at the same time as their patients?**
**A:** Yes. As long as they both have appointments on the same day, both will be vaccinated at the same time.

**Q:** **Are all your employees vaccinated?**
**A:** Legacy will not require its employees or providers to be vaccinated. However, we highly recommend everyone gets a COVID-19 vaccine.

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## COSTS OF THE VACCINE

**Q:** **NEW What are the costs of getting a COVID-19 vaccine?**
**A:** COVID-19 vaccines are free. You do not need health insurance to receive the free vaccine. But if you have health insurance, vaccine providers may charge your health insurance company an administration fee. This means that you might be asked for your insurance information when you get the vaccine. That's why it is important to bring your insurance information if you have health insurance.

**Q:** **NEW Why am I getting an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) document from my health insurance in the mail?**
**A:** If you have health insurance your vaccine provider may charge your health insurance company an administration fee. When this happens and your health insurance company pays this fee, an EOB is sent to you. This EOB gives you information about how an insurance claim from your vaccine provider/site was paid on your behalf.

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# QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VACCINE

**Q: NEW What do we know about the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine?**
**A:** A third vaccine was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use and distribution. The vaccine, which is manufactured by a subsidiary of the Johnson & Johnson company—Janssen Biotech—was given emergency authorization use (EAU) by the FDA. This vaccine is being shipped across the country now.

There are similarities between the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines: Each one is safe to use, has undergone clinical trials, and been analyzed by the FDA.

But there are also differences: The Johnson & Johnson vaccine does not need ultra-cold storage conditions. The vaccines made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech do. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine may be easier to distribute because of that.

The vaccine is also given in a single dose. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines require two separate shots given three to four weeks apart.

Still, all three vaccines are effective in protecting you from the virus.

**Q: With the new COVID virus variations that seem to be spreading. Will the current vaccines still work on these new strands or should I wait until new COVID vaccines come out?**
**A:** All viruses mutate and change, so new variants are expected. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and vaccine experts believe the current vaccines work against the new United Kingdom COVID variant. There is no way to predict when--or if--new vaccines will need to be developed to target new variants in the future. Experts believe vaccine resistant strains are unlikely.

It is important to get vaccinated as soon as a vaccine is available for you. As more people get vaccinated, we can slow the spread of the virus. It is also possible to reduce the risk that variants can become more powerful than vaccines.

Vaccines are one part of the answer. It is also important to continue such measures as wearing a mask, social distancing and hand hygiene—even after you have been vaccinated.

**Q: How do we know if COVID-19 vaccines are safe? *Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** These vaccines have gone through vigorous testing to make sure they are safe. These vaccines have met well established safety standards set by the FDA during trials numbering tens of thousands of people.

The first two vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, rely on messenger RNA, rather than the live virus that causes COVID-19. This type of vaccine teaches our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response,

which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

This technology is relatively new but has been researched for over 10 years. Clinical trials for other vaccines using this technology have been successful. But this is the first large scale use of this type of vaccine. These vaccines were tested in large clinical trials, tens of thousands of people, to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions. This data was reviewed and approved by the FDA, CDC and Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup.

Instead of using mRNA, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses a disabled adenovirus to deliver the instructions. This adenovirus—a type of virus that usually causes colds--with the novel coronavirus' spike protein is carried into human cells. The cells then produce coronavirus proteins to mimic the virus, which helps prime the immune system to fight off an infection from the coronavirus. This approach is not new for Johnson & Johnson as they used a similar method to make the Ebola vaccine.

**Q: Will the mRNA vaccine change my DNA?**
**A:** When people hear the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain a gene, some worry the vaccine could alter their genome. Do not worry: Your own personal DNA is contained within the nucleus of each of your cells. It is virtually impossible for the messenger RNA (mRNA) to get into the nucleus. The mRNA stays in the cytoplasm of the cell — the other material that surrounds the nucleus — to get to the ribosomes, the protein factories of cells. People think they're going to be genetically altered, but that's not the case.

**Q: Have these vaccines been tested in people like me? *Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines and were tested in a diverse group of people. About 30% of U.S. participants were Hispanic, African American, Asian, or Native American. About half were older adults. There were no significant safety concerns identified in these or any other groups. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine trial was conducted in eight countries across three continents, including a diverse and broad population with 34 percent of participants over age 60. Thirty-eight percent of the U.S. participants were comprised of Hispanics, Black/African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans.

**Q: Will the shot hurt? Will it make me sick? What about the side effects?**
**A:** Some people may experience injection site pain, headache, muscle aches or fevers after immunization. These happen more frequently if you are under the age of 55 and after the second dose. These symptoms may be significant enough to miss work for one to two days.

**Q: What should I do if I feel sick after my shot? When should I call my doctor?**
**A:** Side effects after the COVID vaccination are normal and expected. You may have a sore arm, fever, chills, fatigue, body aches, headache, nausea, or other symptoms. These side effects mean that your body is building a strong immune response to the vaccine, which means better protection against COVID. The COVID vaccine cannot give you COVID, the flu, or any other infectious illness.

Care for yourself as if you have a mild cold--stay at home, rest, drink fluids, take over-the-counter medications as needed (unless your doctor has told you not to). A cool washcloth on your arm can help pain at the site. The symptoms should clear up within a few days.

Severe symptoms might mean there's a problem. If you feel chest pain, have trouble breathing, severe dizziness, worsening redness, or pain in your arm after 24 hours, or neurologic symptoms (trouble walking, moving your limbs, or speaking), you should seek emergency care. If your symptoms are not improving after a few days, contact your primary care provider's office.

**Q: How many doses are needed and why? *Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the United States require two shots including the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The first shot starts to build protection, but the second shot helps provide the most protection the vaccine can offer. The Johnson and Johnson/Janssen vaccine is a single dose shot.

**Q: What vaccine are we getting? *Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** Right now, the Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer ,and Moderna vaccines have been approved by the FDA. There are other vaccines being developed currently in trials. Which vaccine you receive will depend on when you get the vaccine, the location, and what supplies are available at that time.

**Q: NEW Can I select which vaccine I am getting?**
**A:** At most vaccine sites or clinics, you cannot select which vaccine you are getting.

**Q: How effective can we expect the vaccine to be? *Updated 3/18/21***
**A:** Pfizer says its vaccine is 95% effective based on the 170 cases of COVID that occurred among their 38,000 trial participants. The Moderna vaccine is 94% effective based on 196 cases of COVID among 30,000 participants, but it prevented 100% of severe COVID cases. Johnson & Johnson vaccine is reported to be 85% effective at preventing a severe or critical form of COVID-19 that can lead to hospitalization or death, according to data released by the company.

**Q: How long will protection from the vaccine last? Are we going to have to get the vaccine every year like the flu vaccine?**
**A:** We don't know yet. Studies are ongoing. It is not known how frequently we need to get vaccinated. We do know that coronaviruses don't change at the same speed as flu viruses do, which is the reason new flu vaccines are needed each fall.

**Q. Will the COVID-19 vaccine be recommended for previously COVID-19 positive individuals?**
**A:** The COVID-19 vaccination is safe to get regardless of prior COVID-19 infection. Pre-vaccination antibody testing is not recommended or needed.

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## VACCINE FOR CHILDREN

**Q: Is the vaccine safe for children? When will they be able to get it?**
**A:** The Pfizer vaccine is approved for those 16 years and older. The Moderna vaccine is approved for those 18 years and older.

Vaccines must be shown in clinical trials to be safe and effective in children before the FDA will allow use in children. Pfizer has begun testing in children ages 12 and older, and Moderna announced plans to test its vaccine in 3,000 teens. If those trials go well, they may go on to conduct trials in younger children, following a pattern typical in drug and vaccine trials in general.

There is hope that by fall 2021, there will be a vaccine that can be administered to children over age 12.

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## VACCINE FOR WOMEN

**Q: NEW Can I get my annual mammogram at the same time as my COVID-19 vaccine?**
**A:** All vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccines, can briefly make lymph nodes swell. This is normal. Your lymph nodes, located throughout your body, become swollen in response to stress, infection, or illness. These swollen lymph nodes are one sign that your lymphatic system is working to rid your body of the responsible agents. But this can also have an impact on mammography results.

If you are planning an annual mammogram screening, we recommend that it be completed before you get your COVID-19 vaccine or 4-6 weeks after you receive the vaccine. This will help prevent abnormal results that would lead to additional testing.

For breast cancer patients needing mammograms, the same recommendations hold true. All vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccines, can briefly make lymph nodes swell. We therefore recommend you talk with a doctor first about the timing of your COVID vaccination. Also, do not delay any diagnostic imaging. For more questions, please contact your doctor.

**Q: Is the vaccine safe for pregnant women, women who may become pregnant or those who are nursing?**
**A:** There is little safety data about the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant individuals. However, experts suspect the risk to be low. Data is being collected now, and it is expected that information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines related to pregnancy and nursing will become publicly available in coming months. Legacy recommends that anyone who is pregnant, may become pregnant or is nursing speak with their doctor before deciding if a COVID-19 vaccine is right for them.

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## AFTER THE VACCINES

**Q: Can I go back to my pre-COVID lifestyle (no masks, going wherever I want, meeting with groups, traveling) once I get the vaccine?**
**A:** It will continue to be important for everyone to wear masks in public or around other people until large enough numbers of people have gotten the vaccine or the disease has stopped spreading through communities. It's impossible to tell by looking at someone whether they've been vaccinated. It is also impossible to effectively enforce mask mandates if only unvaccinated people were required to wear masks. No vaccine is 100% effective. We don't yet know if any of the vaccines prevent transmission, so it might be possible to catch or transmit the disease even if you have been vaccinated.

For the latest information:

- Oregon Health Authority Vaccine Eligibility and FAQ Tool
- Washington State Department of Health
- Find-a-Phase - Washington State Department of Health
- Clark County Public Health – Vaccine webform
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention