

## Top COVID-19 vaccine safety questions

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### Can I trust the vaccine approval process?

- Yes. Clinical studies can take a long time because it usually takes a long time to find enough volunteers and people who have the disease. We did not have that problem with COVID-19.
- Researchers were able to make the clinical trial process more efficient while keeping safety a top priority.
- Reference: [Unwavering Regulatory Safeguards for COVID-19 Vaccines | Vaccination | JAMA | JAMA Network](#)

## Is the vaccine safe?

- Yes. The vaccine has been studied in tens of thousands of volunteers in clinical trials. Clinical trials have focused on the safety of each vaccine.
- The vaccine is the most watched medicine in history. Organizations like the FDA are closely watching for safety. An example is when there were concerns with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and we paused using it for 10 days.
- Serious safety problems are rare. It can include anaphylaxis, thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome, or myocarditis. The risk of these problems is lower in people who got the vaccine than people who have not got the vaccine.
- Reference: [Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in the US | CDC](#)

## Is the vaccine safe for pregnancy?

- Yes. American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG), Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), and CDC recommend that all pregnant people get the vaccine.
- A new study from the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) shows that pregnant people who got the vaccine had lower rates of pregnancy loss and birth defects than normally seen.
- Pregnant people have a higher risk of serious complications and death if they get sick with COVID-19.
- References: [Preliminary Findings of mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine Safety in Pregnant Persons | NEJM](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding \(cdc.gov\)](#)

## Is the vaccine safe if I have an autoimmune disorder?

- Talk with your primary care provider or specialist provider (if you have one).
- CDC says that people with autoimmune disorders can get the vaccine. There have not been studies focused on people with autoimmune disorders.
- Reference: [COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Underlying Medical Conditions | CDC](#)

## **Do I still need the vaccine if I have had COVID-19? What about natural immunity?**

- Yes. Some studies say that say people who do not have the vaccine are twice as likely to get COVID-19 again.
- Natural immunity (or our body's immune system) can provide some protection against COVID-19 but we do not know for how long or how much.
- People who had COVID-19 and got one dose of Pfizer later are better protected against getting COVID-19 again than people who have not got the vaccine.
- Reference: [New CDC Study: Vaccination Offers Higher Protection than Previous COVID-19 Infection | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC](#)

## **Why should I get the vaccine if people who got the vaccine are still getting sick?**

- The vaccines shorten how long you are sick.
- The vaccines help stop you from getting very sick and going to the hospital.
- The less time you are sick, the less time you can get your loved ones sick.
- Reference: [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)

## **What is the difference between the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccines?**

- The vaccines use different ways to teach your body how to recognize COVID-19. This way your body learns how to make antibodies and fight against COVID-19.
- Pfizer and Moderna are mRNA vaccines. The Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine uses a harmless version of a different virus called viral vector.
- CDC does not recommend one vaccine over the others.
- References: [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety | CDC](#) and [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety | CDC](#) and [Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety | CDC](#) and [Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

## How does mRNA affect my body?

- mRNA (messenger RNA) is a normal part of your cells and tells your body how to make proteins.
- The mRNA in Pfizer and Moderna vaccines teaches your body to make a small COVID-19 protein (spike protein found on the outside of the COVID-19 virus). This way your body learns how to make antibodies and fight against COVID-19.
- The mRNA is broken down in your body a few days after getting the vaccine.
- References: [Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#) and [How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work \(cdc.gov\)](#) and [How long do mRNA and spike proteins last in the body? | Nebraska Medicine Omaha, NE](#)

## What about long term side effects?

- Serious side effects usually happen within 6 weeks of getting a vaccine. This is based on over 200 years of vaccine research.
- The vaccines are closely watched for safety concerns. No serious side effects have been seen after about a year, so long term side effects are very unlikely.
- Like other medicines, no one can promise there will not be long-term side effects.
- References: [Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#) and [Vaccines are highly unlikely to cause side effects long after getting the shot \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)

## How is the FDA-approved Pfizer vaccine different than the EUA-approved Pfizer vaccine? What is Comirnaty?

- There is no difference. The ingredients are the same. There are just some legal differences between the EUA (emergency use authorization) and FDA-approval.
- Comirnaty and Pfizer are the same vaccine. Comirnaty is the brand name of the Pfizer vaccine. It is normal for medicines to get a brand name when they are FDA-approved.
- References: [FDA Approves First COVID-19 Vaccine | FDA](#) and [You asked, we answered: Are Pfizer's Comirnaty and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines the same or different? | Nebraska Medicine Omaha, NE](#)

## **Do the vaccines include fetal cells?**

- No. The vaccines do not include any fetal cells.
- Pfizer and Moderna used fetal cells when researching the vaccines to see if the vaccines would work. Johnson & Johnson use fetal cells to prepare the vaccine, but it is purified and all fetal cells are removed from the vaccine before you get it.
- Fetal cells that are used are not from recent abortions. They come from fetal cells from the 1970s and 1980s.
- References: [COVID-19 Vaccines & Fetal Cell Lines](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccines and Fetal Cells \(Michigan DHHS\)](#)

## **What if I or someone I live with recently got sick with COVID-19? When do I get my vaccine?**

- If you had COVID-19, you can get the vaccine as soon as you are done with isolation. This is when you do not have symptoms anymore and it has been at least 10 days since your symptoms first started. Check with your doctor if you go to the hospital or if you are immunocompromised.
- If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you can get the vaccine as soon as you are done with quarantine. This means after 14 days without any symptoms or sooner if you got a negative COVID-19 test.
- If you got a COVID monoclonal antibody treatment (casirivimab/imdevimab, sotrovimab, or bamlanivimab/etesevimab), you should wait 90 days before you get the vaccine.
- References: [When to Get the Covid Vaccine After Having Covid – Cleveland Clinic](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC](#) and [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation | CDC](#)