



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COVID-19 VACCINES

What are the benefits of getting vaccinated?

The COVID-19 vaccines produce protection against the disease, as a result of developing an immune response to the SARS-Cov-2 virus. Developing immunity through vaccination means there is a reduced risk of developing the illness and its consequences. This immunity helps you fight the virus if exposed. Getting vaccinated may also protect people around you, because if you are protected from getting infected and from disease, you are less likely to infect someone else. This is particularly important to protect people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, such as healthcare providers, older or elderly adults, and people with other medical conditions.

What symptoms can I expect after receiving the vaccine?

You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects. [Click here to read more about what possible side effects you may experience after getting a COVID-19 vaccine and how to best care for yourself.](#)

Should I be vaccinated if I have already had COVID-19?

Even if you have already had COVID-19, you should be vaccinated when it is offered to you. The protection that someone gains from having COVID-19 will vary from person to person, and we also don't know how long natural immunity might last.

Will COVID-19 vaccines provide long-term protection?

Because COVID vaccines have only been developed in the past months, it's too early to know the duration of protection of COVID-19 vaccines. Research is ongoing to answer this question. However, it's encouraging that available data suggest that most people who recover from COVID-19 develop an immune response that provides at least some period of protection against reinfection – although we're still learning how strong this protection is, and how long it lasts.

Can I have the second dose with a different vaccine than the first dose?

Clinical trials in some countries are looking at whether you can have a first dose from one vaccine and a second dose from a different vaccine. There isn't enough data yet to recommend this type of combination.



Can we stop taking precautions after being vaccinated?

Vaccination protects you from getting seriously ill and dying from COVID-19. For the first fourteen days after getting a vaccination, you do not have significant levels of protection, then it increases gradually. For a single dose vaccine, immunity will generally occur two weeks after vaccination. For two-dose vaccines, both doses are needed to achieve the highest level of best immunity possible.

While a COVID-19 vaccine will protect you from serious illness and death, we still don't know the extent to which it keeps you from being infected and passing the virus on to others. To help keep others safe, continue to maintain at least a six-foot distance from others, cover a cough or sneeze in your elbow, clean your hands frequently and wear a mask, particularly in enclosed, crowded or poorly ventilated spaces. Always follow guidance from local authorities based on the situation and risk where you live.

Do the vaccines protect against variants?

The COVID-19 vaccines are expected to provide at least some protection against new virus variants and are effective at preventing serious illness and death. That's because these vaccines create a broad immune response, and any virus changes or mutations should not make vaccines completely ineffective. If any of these vaccines become less effective against one or more variants, it will be possible to change the composition of the vaccines to protect against these variants. Data continues to be collected and analysed on new variants of the COVID-19 virus.

While we are learning more, we need to do everything possible to stop the spread of the virus in order to prevent mutations that may reduce the efficacy of existing vaccines. This means staying at least 1 metre away from others, covering a cough or sneeze in your elbow, frequently cleaning your hands, wearing a mask and avoiding poorly ventilated rooms or opening a window.

For more information, see [The effects of virus variants on COVID-19 vaccines.](#)

Can the COVID-19 vaccine cause a positive test result for the disease, such as for a PCR or antigen test?

No, the COVID-19 vaccine will not cause a positive test result for a COVID-19 PCR or antigen laboratory test. This is because the tests check for active disease and not whether an individual is immune or not. However, because the COVID-19 vaccine prompts an immune response, it may be possible to test positive in an antibody (serology) test that measures COVID-19 immunity in an individual.

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