

Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccines

“How were these vaccines developed so quickly?”

Scientists weren't starting from scratch.

- Researchers were already studying coronaviruses before this pandemic began, and were already working on developing vaccines with mRNA technology (which is used in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) to protect against them.

COVID-19 vaccines became a global priority.

- Billions of dollars from the public and private sector went into the development of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Normally, there's a lot of competition around developing things like medications, medical tests, and vaccines, but with COVID-19, countries shared information to help speed the process.

The pandemic grew quickly.

- Because so many people got the virus, researchers were able to study how well the vaccines protected people at a more rapid pace.

“How do we know that they're safe?”

All safety steps were followed

- All of the normal safety steps that are taken when developing a new vaccine were also taken in the development of the COVID-19 vaccines. None of the safety steps were skipped.

We've studied them...A LOT!

- The vaccines were studied in clinical trials, which included tens of thousands of people from all different backgrounds. They have now been given to billions of people across the world.
- We continue to monitor their safety, efficacy, and side effects. In fact, they are the most closely monitored vaccines in U.S. history!

Information has been independently reviewed.

- Information from the clinical trials was closely reviewed by monitoring boards made up of independent experts who did not work for pharmaceutical companies or for the government.

“What about side effects?”

Side effects are normal with any vaccine.

- Vaccines may have potential side effects as your immune system is responding to the vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccine side effects are usually mild.

- Some people won't have any side effects at all. If you do have side effects, they shouldn't interfere too much with your day.
- Common side effects are arm pain, headache, feeling very tired, and slight fever.
- It's more likely you'll experience side effects after the second shot.

COVID-19 side effects are usually short-lived.

- For most people who have side effects, they go away fairly quickly, within one to three days.

Serious side effects are rare, and the benefits of vaccination still greatly outweigh the risks.

- Billions of vaccine doses have been administered worldwide, and serious adverse events have been rare.

“Can I get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines?”

No. You cannot get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines.

- The vaccines cause your body to create antibodies against COVID-19. Antibodies fight off the virus if it tries to invade your body. The vaccines cannot cause your body to create the virus.
- There is no live virus in the vaccine.

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“Should I get vaccinated if I’ve already had COVID-19?”

Yes! The vaccines provide the best form of protection against reinfection.

- Unvaccinated people are twice as likely to become re-infected as vaccinated people.
- The antibodies from having COVID-19 may not be as strong as the ones you will get from the vaccine.

“What if I’m pregnant or want to become pregnant in the future?”

The COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for pregnant people and do not affect fertility.

- The CDC recommends vaccination for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future.
- Pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated will protect both you and your baby.

Will the vaccines protect me from the Omicron variant?”

Yes. In fact, the Omicron variant makes the need to protect yourself even more urgent.

- It is normal for a virus to change (“mutate”) over time and for new, slightly different versions of a virus (“variants”) to emerge.
- Some variants, such as the Omicron variant, transmit more easily and can make some people seriously ill—**so protecting ourselves with vaccination** becomes even more important.

“Can I get vaccinated if I have allergies?”

Yes! Common allergies, such as food, animal, pollen, or latex, are not a problem and should not prevent anyone from getting vaccinated.

- Do not get a COVID-19 vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction (i.e., anaphylaxis) to vaccines or the components of that vaccine
- Anyone with a history of severe medication allergies should talk to their health care provider about whether or not the vaccine is right for them.

For additional up-to-date information on COVID-19 and the vaccines, please visit the CDC and the New York City Department of Health webpages:



<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>



<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers-vaccines-communication.page>



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