Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines

Now that authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines are being administered in the United States, accurate vaccine information is critical.

FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development or in use in the United States, contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development, and the goal for each of them is to 'teach' our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes teaching the immune system can cause symptoms such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity. Learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work.

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it is possible a person could be infected and get sick with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination. This is because the body has not had enough time to react to the vaccine to provide protection.

FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests
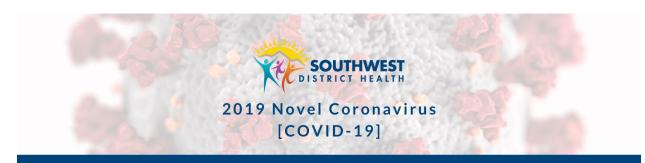
Neither the recently authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines, nor the other COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States, cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a **current infection**.

If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a **previous infection**, and in the future may be used to determine that an individual has some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

FACT: People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long.

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We won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have a vaccine and more data on how well it works.

Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

FACT: Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19
While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a [severe illness](#) or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at [increased risk of severe complications](#). If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).

FACT: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA
mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease.

Learn more about [how COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work](#).

How do I know which sources of COVID-19 vaccine information are accurate?
It can be difficult to know which sources of information you can trust. Learn more about [finding credible vaccine information](#).

Getting Vaccinated with a COVID-19 Vaccine

How many shots of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?
All but one of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in Phase 3 clinical trials in the United States need two shots to be effective. The other COVID-19 vaccine uses one shot.

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Do I need to wear a mask when I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?
Yes. CDC recommends during the pandemic people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside your household. Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a mask without assistance should not wear a mask. See: considerations for wearing masks.

Who is paying for COVID-19 vaccine?
Vaccine doses will be given to the American people at no cost. Vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot, and can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the federal government.

Are there special considerations on who should get the COVID-19 vaccine first?
The Idaho coronavirus advisory committee (CVAC) is recommending that the initial shipment of vaccine be reserved for hospital staff and outpatient clinic staff who provide care for COVID-19 patients, including healthcare providers working in the dental and pharmacy occupations. Public health and emergency managers who cannot telework are also included in the first phase. Skilled nurses and those working in assisted living and intermediate care facilities are counted as healthcare workers in this phase, and residents of these facilities also have the option to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The second phase of the vaccination plan will include essential workers, also called critical infrastructure workers, including:
- First responders (fire, police, protective services and community support personnel).
- Pre-K-12 school staff and teachers and daycare workers
- Correctional and detention facility staff, except medical staff already in Phase 1a
- Food processing workers
- Grocery and convenience store workers
- Idaho National Guard
- Other essential workers not already included and unable to telework or social distance at work

The list of recommended priority groups can be found on the IDHW coronavirus website. CVAC makes recommendations on which populations should be prioritized for vaccination, and the final decision is made by Gov. Brad Little.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?

Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Currently, the recommendation is to receive a vaccine, when you qualify, even if you previously have had COVID-19.

Why would a vaccine be needed if we can do other things, like social distancing and wearing masks, to prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading?

Stopping a pandemic requires using all tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Covering your mouth and nose with a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, and washing your hands frequently also will continue to reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others.

Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have received 2 doses of the vaccine?

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic (masks, distancing, washing hands). Experts will need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before changing recommendations for slowing the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus spreads in communities, will also affect any new recommendations.

When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others after I have been vaccinated?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoiding close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

Are there other vaccines that can help prevent me from getting COVID-19?

No. However, an influenza (flu) vaccine can prevent you from getting the flu while we remain in a COVID-19 pandemic. This can keep you from having more severe illness from flu, COVID-19, or both.

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Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from COVID-19 vaccines?

The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Since this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Some early evidence seems to suggest that natural immunity may not last very long, and perhaps for less time than immunity from vaccination.

What percentage of the population needs to get vaccinated to have herd immunity to COVID-19?

Experts do not know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. Herd immunity is when enough people have protection—either from previous infection or vaccination—making it unlikely a virus can spread widely and cause disease. As a result, everyone within the community is protected even if some people don't have any protection themselves.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Data suggests that everyone should be prepared for mild to moderate side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine. These side effects – including injection site pain or swelling, muscle pain, headaches, or mild to moderate fevers – are a sign that the body is producing an immune response. Some of these symptoms may be more pronounced after the second vaccine.
It is important to be prepared and to know what to expect. Over-the-counter medicine like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can minimize side effects. If you can, plan to rest and take it easy following vaccination - your body will be working hard to produce an immune response and get you protected against the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccines and Anaphylaxis

There are reports that a few people are experiencing severe allergic reactions—also known as anaphylaxis—after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, including in Idaho.

If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911.

What CDC Recommends:
If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in a COVID-19 vaccine, CDC recommends that you should not get that specific vaccine. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable therapies, you should ask your doctor if you should get a COVID-19 vaccine. Your doctor will help you decide if it is safe for you to get vaccinated.

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CDC recommends that people with a history of severe allergic reactions not related to vaccines or injectable medications—such as allergies to food, pet, venom, environmental, or latex—may be considered to get a COVID-19 vaccination. People with a history of allergies to oral medications or a family history of severe allergic reactions, or who might have a milder allergy to vaccines (no anaphylaxis)—may also may still get vaccinated. However, it still is important to inform your doctor if you have a history of anaphylaxis to any other sources even when you have not had an anaphylactic reaction to other vaccines or other injectable medications.

If you have a severe allergic reaction after getting the first shot, you should not get the second shot. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist in allergies and immunology to provide more care or advice.

Safeguards Are in Place:
CDC has provided recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination providers about how to prepare for the possibility of a severe allergic reaction.
Learn more about what to expect after getting vaccinated for COVID-19, including normal side effects and tips to reduce pain or discomfort.

CDC Is Monitoring Reports of Severe Allergic Reactions:
If someone has a severe allergic reaction after getting vaccinated, their vaccination provider will send a report to the Vaccine Adverse Reporting System (VAERS) VAERS is the national system that collects reports from healthcare professionals, vaccine manufacturers, and the public about adverse events that happen after vaccination. Reports of adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns are followed up with specific studies.

Learn more about how federal partners are monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html

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What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Accessible version: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects **may feel like flu** and **may even affect your ability** to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Common side effects

On the arm where you got the shot:

- Pain
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:

- Fever
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Headache

Helpful tips

If you have pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot:

- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area.
- Use or exercise your arm.

To reduce discomfort from fever:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress lightly.

When to call the doctor

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

v-safe
after vaccination
health checker

Ask your healthcare provider about getting started with v-safe

Use your smartphone to tell CDC about any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. You'll also get reminders if you need a second dose

Learn more about **v-safe**.
www.cdc.gov/vsafe

Remember

- Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.
- With most COVID-19 vaccines, you will need 2 shots in order for them to work. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first one, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.
- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.
- It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER, PLEASE FILL IN THE INFORMATION BELOW:

If your temperature is _____°F or _____°C or higher or if you have questions, call your healthcare provider.

Tell your healthcare provider about: _____

Healthcare provider phone number: _____

Medication (if needed):
Take _____ every _____ hours as needed.
(type and dose or amount)

CDC