



Updated COVID-19 Questions and Answers

What is new with COVID-19 Vaccines?

The [CDC recommends that](#) everyone over the age of 5 years old gets the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine helps protect against COVID-19 and helps keep you from becoming seriously ill if you do get COVID-19. There are still three vaccines available for free in the United States.

- Pfizer-BioNTech (also referred to as Pfizer) and Moderna, are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. They work by telling the body how to respond when exposed to COVID-19. Neither vaccine contains a live virus nor affects your DNA. Each requires two doses, and both are close to 95% effective. The vaccines will not give you COVID-19.
 - Pfizer-BioNTech
 - 2 injections are given 3 weeks apart.
 - Important to get both injections to get the full effect of the vaccine.
 - Fully authorized in the United States for ages 16 and above and has Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for ages 5-15.
 - Moderna
 - 2 injections are given 4 weeks apart.
 - Important to get both injections to get the full effect of the vaccine.
 - Fully authorized in the United States for ages 18 and up.
- Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine uses an inactivated adenovirus or common cold virus and works by telling the body how to respond when exposed to COVID-19. It does not contain live virus and will not give you COVID-19. It only requires one dose and is 72% effective.
 - 1 injection
 - EUA approval for ages 18 and older.

Vaccine Boosters are now recommended.

- First booster
 - Anyone 12 and older who got the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine as their primary series should receive a booster at least 5 months after finishing the primary series.
 - Adolescents between 12 and 17 should only get a Pfizer booster.
 - Those 18 and older can get either a Pfizer or Moderna booster.
 - A booster is not recommended for children under 12.
 - If you got the J&J/Janssen vaccine you should get a booster of either Pfizer or Moderna at least 2 months after receiving the J&J/Janssen vaccine.
- 2nd booster
 - A 2nd booster of either Pfizer-Bio-Tech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for anyone 50 or older, and especially anyone 65 and older and anyone 50 and older who has an underlying medical condition that puts them at higher risk for severe disease with COVID-19.
 - The second booster should be given at least 4 months after the first booster.
 - To find a COVID-19 vaccine near you, search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233.

Here are some other key points about COVID-19 vaccines:

- It is OK if the COVID-19 vaccine and the influenza vaccine is given on the same day.
- It is OK to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you had COVID-19, but you should wait until your symptoms have gone away and your isolation period is over.

Are there any testing updates?

- You should take a COVID-19 test if you have had any of the following things happen in your life:
 - You have symptoms of COVID-19
 - You were in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in the previous 5 days.
 - If you need screening for work, schools, parties, and other places that require testing
 - Before and after you travel
- There are 2 types of tests that detect COVID-19
 - PCR test
 - Usually taken by nasal swab, but in some instances can be taken by saliva
 - Results take up to 1-3 days (maybe more)
 - Are processed in laboratory
 - Results are reliable if you have symptoms or not
 - No need to follow up with another test
 - Rapid tests (or antigen test)
 - Taken by nasal swab
 - Results in 15-30 minutes
 - Can be processed anywhere
 - Results not as reliable as PCR test, especially in people without symptoms
 - May need to have a follow-up PCR test if you test negative and have symptoms

- At-home rapid tests are available for purchase at local pharmacies and other places
- You can order 2 sets of 4 free at home tests [here](#).
- If you test positive:
 - Isolate for a minimum of 5 days.
 - Monitor your symptoms.
 - Follow up with your healthcare professional to see if he/she recommends a follow up laboratory test like a PCR.
- If you test negative:
 - If you are up-to-date on your vaccines, you can return to normal activities but if your [community level](#) is high, wear a mask indoors.
 - If you are not up-to-date on your vaccine:
 - And have symptoms, you should quarantine for at least 5 days.
 - And have no symptoms or exposure, return to normal activities and be sure to get up-to-date on your vaccines.

What treatments are available for COVID-19?

- If you are likely to get very sick from COVID-19, your doctor can prescribe medicines to help you stay out of the hospital. These should be started as soon as you test positive and within 5 days of developing symptoms. Your doctor will decide which, if any, are appropriate for your illness. They include
 - Oral antiviral medications: These lessen the ability of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to multiply and spread, thus preventing progression to severe COVID -19 in certain patients.
 - Monoclonal antibodies: These help your immune system recognize and respond to the virus more effectively and also prevent progression to severe disease.

How can I protect myself during this phase of COVID-19?

COVID-19 Community Levels are a tool that can be used to help communities know what prevention steps can be taken. Levels of low, medium, and high are based on a number of factors in the community, including hospital beds, hospital admissions, and number of new cases in the area. Individuals can protect themselves by knowing their [COVID-19 Community Level](#).

- Low Level
 - Stay up to date with vaccines.
 - If you have symptoms, get tested.
- Medium Level
 - Talk to your doctor about the precautions you need to take, including whether you should wear a mask.
 - Stay up-to-date with vaccines.
 - If you have symptoms, get tested.
- High Level
 - Wear a mask if indoors.
 - Stay up to date with vaccines.
 - If you have symptoms, get tested.
 - If you are at high risk for getting severe illness, ask your doctor if you need to take extra precautions.