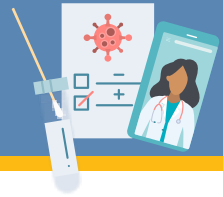


COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe & Effective

The Science Is Clear: The Benefits of Vaccination Outweigh the Risks



Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

Everyone ages 12 and over are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. All available vaccines are free.

Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?

Yes! Current data shows that the Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. To get the full benefits from the vaccine, it is important to get both doses of Pfizer or Moderna. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should talk to their doctor about whether they need a third dose. The J&J vaccine only requires one dose.

Should I get vaccinated even though there are viral variants like the Delta variant?

Yes! The Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J vaccines are effective against the Delta variant, preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Vaccination also limits the opportunities for more variants to evolve.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Yes! The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted full approval for the Pfizer vaccine for persons ages 16 and over in August 2021. Pfizer is authorized for use in youth ages 12 to 15 years old as well. The J&J and Moderna vaccines have emergency-use authorization (EUA) from the FDA for persons ages 18 and over. These authorizations are the result of large clinical trials that included a wide variety of participants.

How was the vaccine developed so quickly?

While the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) was only detected in December 2019, scientists around the world have been working on vaccines for closely related viruses since 2006. For more information, see [Coronavirus Vaccine Development](#).

What are possible side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines?

Some people have experienced side effects, like temporary pain or swelling in the arm where they received the vaccine, fever, chills, tiredness, and/or headache. These side effects are normal for any vaccine and expected as the body builds cells to defend against COVID-19.

Serious adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination are rare.

The FDA has determined that the benefits of this vaccine still outweigh the risks of not being vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Heart, and the American Academy of Pediatrics also Association recommend that anyone ages 12 and over get vaccinated. For more information, see [Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines \(CDC\)](#).

You should seek immediate medical attention if you have any of the symptoms described below after vaccination:

A rare but serious type of blood clot, [Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome \(TTS\)](#), has occurred in a small number of people who received the J&J vaccine. An increased risk of TTS has not been seen with the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. Symptoms include shortness of breath; chest pain; leg swelling; persistent abdominal pain, severe headaches, or blurred vision; easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection.

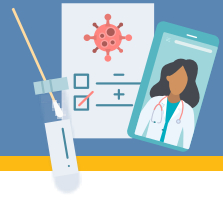
Rare instances of [Guillain-Barré Syndrome \(GBS\)](#) have also occurred in a small number of persons who received the J&J vaccine. GBS is a rare nervous system disorder that can cause muscle weakness, or in the most severe cases, paralysis. Symptoms usually began 1-2 weeks after vaccination but can also appear later than that. Symptoms can include weakness or tingling sensations, especially in the legs or arms, that can worsen and spread to other parts of the body.

In the over 150 million people who had been fully vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) as of late July, the CDC confirmed about 700 cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the sac around the heart). These cases were mostly in male teens and young adults, ages 16 and over, within a few days of getting the second dose of vaccine. Symptoms include chest pain, shortness of breath; or feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart. Most persons who received care responded well to treatment and rest, and quickly felt better.

For more information, see [Myocarditis and Pericarditis Following mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination \(CDC\)](#).

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Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe for persons who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding?

Yes! The COVID-19 vaccine can help protect against severe illness for persons who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding, trying to become pregnant, or might become pregnant in the future. Due to changes in the body from pregnancy, pregnant and recently pregnant persons are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant persons.

For more information, please see [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding \(CDC\)](#).

Who needs an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine?

The CDC is recommending that moderately to severely immunocompromised people receive an additional (3rd) dose of an mRNA vaccine. This includes people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

People should talk to their healthcare provider about whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for them. Only those who have received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna are eligible to receive a third dose. Currently, additional doses have not been authorized for the J & J vaccine.

Who is eligible for a COVID-19 booster?

According to the CDC, the following groups of people who received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine at least 6 months ago **should** receive a booster shot:

Individuals 65 years of age and older;

- Residents of any age who live in long-term care settings;
- Individuals ages 50-64 with underlying medical conditions

Other groups who **may** receive a booster shot based on individual risks and benefits are:

- Persons ages 18-49 with underlying medical conditions
- Persons ages 18-64 who are at increased risk for COVID-19 because of where they live or work

Talk with your healthcare provider if you are unsure about whether you need a booster shot. You do not need a note or “attestation” from your healthcare provider if you are in one of the groups listed above

For more information about who may receive a booster, please see [Who Is Eligible for a COVID-19 Booster? \(CDC\)](#)

Can people who received the Moderna or J & J COVID-19 vaccine receive a booster?

The FDA has **not** authorized booster shots for those who received either the Moderna or J & J vaccines but will be reviewing data over the next few months.

Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

There are many places to receive a free COVID-19 vaccine. None of the Alameda County Community Vaccination Clinics require I.D., insurance, or an appointment.

For a comprehensive list of vaccine sites near you, see [Alameda County Vaccine Availability](#) or visit <https://linktr.ee/AlamedaCountyOHE>.

For assistance scheduling a free vaccine appointment, call 510-208-4VAX (510-208-4829).



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
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