

GET THE FACTS ON THE COVID-19 VACCINES



As we begin 2021, our nation has reached a very tragic milestone of over 350,000 individuals having lost their lives to the COVID-19 virus. But hope is on the horizon to stop COVID-19 in its tracks. Two vaccines were approved last month and more are in development. Naturally, you may have questions about these new vaccines, their safety and efficacy and whether you should receive them when eligible. Below, we have provided answers to frequently asked questions about these vaccines to help individuals become informed. We have also included links to additional resources to learn more. Thank you for your interest.

Q1: How many vaccines have been approved so far to prevent COVID-19?

In December 2020, the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved two vaccines to prevent COVID-19, at the recommendation of the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). A Task Force of experts convened by New York State also approved the vaccines. The first approved vaccine is made by Pfizer-BioNtech and requires two doses, given 21 days apart. The second vaccine is manufactured by Moderna and requires two doses given 28 days apart. Both vaccines require completion of two doses to be fully immunized against COVID-19. Both doses should be given using the same vaccine product. Additional COVID-19 vaccines are in development.

Q2: Are the approved vaccines safe and effective?

Creating a vaccine is a very complex and highly regulated process. Given the worldwide impact of the pandemic, significant resources were devoted both by the federal government and vaccine manufacturers to create vaccines to prevent COVID-19. No safety protocols or testing requirements were bypassed. Instead, experts worked around the clock for several months to develop, test and seek approval for human use through a transparent process. Decades of research from leading medical experts have proven vaccines are safe and effective. Further, vaccines are continuously monitored for safety and possible adverse events by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information click [here](#).

Phase 3 (final phase) clinical trials for the approved COVID-19 vaccines found them to be about 50% effective after the first dose is given and approximately 95% effective after both doses are given.

Q3: Are there side effects to these vaccines?

Short-term mild or moderate side effects are normal after receiving vaccines. Side effects can be a sign that your immune system is responding to the vaccine. Common side effects may include a headache, chills, fatigue, muscle pain or a fever lasting a day or two. In rare instances, people can develop an allergic reaction shortly after they have been vaccinated. For this reason, all who receive vaccines are closely monitored for a period afterward by trained vaccine providers. The COVID-19 vaccine is not recommended for those who have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in COVID-19 vaccines or after a previous dose of the vaccine.

Q4: If I already had COVID-19, should I still get vaccinated?

Yes, if you previously had COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, you can and should still receive the vaccine.

Q5: Can I get vaccinated and still get COVID-19?

It takes 1 to 2 weeks following the second dose before a person is considered fully vaccinated and immune to COVID-19 at a level of 95%. If you are exposed to COVID-19 just prior to or during this window after receiving the vaccines, it is still possible to get the virus.

Q6: Can the vaccines cause COVID-19?

No. Neither approved vaccines are live virus vaccines and cannot give you COVID-19.

Q7: Can I receive other vaccines at the same time I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

The CDC recommends receiving the COVID-19 vaccine alone, with a minimum of 14 days before or after receiving any other vaccine.

Q8: Are COVID-19 vaccines a treatment or cure if I do get the virus?

No, while COVID-19 vaccines can prevent you from getting the COVID-19 virus, if you have an active infection, these vaccines are not a treatment or cure.

Q9: Should children and adolescents be given these vaccines?

While children are being enrolled in vaccine clinical trials now to determine use and efficacy, currently the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine is only recommended for those aged 16 and older and Moderna's vaccine is recommended for those aged 18 and older.

Q10: I'm healthy, why should I bother to get vaccinated?

While older individuals and those with underlying conditions may be more severely impacted by the virus, there are reports of young and healthy individuals being hospitalized and even dying from it. As a result, healthy individuals should be vaccinated when eligible to protect themselves. Further, experts are saying we may need 70-90% of the population vaccinated to reach herd (or community) immunity to prevent its spread and to protect those who cannot be vaccinated. Further women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should discuss whether to get a COVID-19 vaccine with their health care provider. Please see The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' guidance for pregnant and breast-feeding women [here](#).

Q11: I heard these vaccines use a new technology? Is it safe? I read on social media it will change my DNA? Another post said it was developed to control the population through microchip tracking. Are these true?

Both approved COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA technology. While mRNA vaccine technology is new it is not unknown. This technology has been studied for more than a decade. These vaccines do not enter the nucleus of cells and do not alter or interact with the DNA of vaccine recipients. Further, there is no "microchip" in the vaccines to track people.

Q12: I read there is a new variant of the COVID-19 virus that is more transmissible? Will the COVID-19 vaccines work against this variant?

We are starting to see a new variant of the COVID-19 virus in the United States and very recently in New York State. According to federal and state medical experts, the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be effective in preventing this new variant as well.

Q13: I heard New York and other states have started to roll out implementation of the vaccines. How do I know when I will be eligible to receive it and is there a cost?

First, the COVID-19 vaccines will be provided free to individuals. Further, with the two COVID-19 vaccines just being approved last month and more in development, initial supply of the vaccines is limited but expected to increase significantly in the coming weeks and months. As a result, the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued recommendations for vaccine roll out in phases by population starting with staff and patients in hospitals and nursing homes and expanding to other frontline workers and individuals in the community over time. New York is closely following the ACIP recommendations. For more information on these phases and New York's vaccine implementation schedule including an eligibility tracker please use the following resources:

[ACIP Phased Implementation](#)
[NYS Phased Implementation](#)
[NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Tool](#)
[NYC COVID-19 Vaccine Locator Tool](#)

Q14: Where can I go to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines?

While there are many resources available to learn more about the COVID-19 virus and the recently approved vaccines, we urge you to rely on trusted sources of science and evidence-based information. This includes speaking with a trusted health care provider and also viewing federal and state resources to learn more including the following:

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
[NYS Department of Health](#)
[Let's Get Immunized NY](#)

**Together we can protect ourselves, our families, and our communities and end this pandemic by getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and continuing to wear masks, wash hands and maintain social distance.
Let's Get Immunized New York!**

To access all hyperlinked resources, please visit www.LetsGetImmunizedNY.org

Campaign Partners

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