

# Frequently asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccines

## **Question: Are COVID-19 Vaccines Free?**

**Answer:** In the U.S., the federal government is providing COVID-19 vaccines free of charge to all residents, regardless of immigration status or health insurance coverage. The COVID-19 vaccines are free whether offered by a clinic, retail pharmacy or other location.

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## **Question: How did the FDA determine the safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in kids ages 12 through 15?**

**Answer:** The FDA reviewed a study of more than 2,200 U.S. children ages 12 through 15. Of this group, about half were given the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The other children were given a harmless, fake (placebo) shot.

A week after the second dose was given, research showed no cases of COVID-19 in the 1,005 children given the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Among 978 children given the placebo, there were 16 cases of COVID-19. None of the children had previously been diagnosed with COVID-19. The results suggest that the vaccine is 100% effective at preventing the COVID-19 virus in this age group.

A portion of the children given the vaccine were also monitored for at least two months after being given the second dose.

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## **Question: Can COVID-19 Vaccines affect the heart?**

**Answer:** In the U.S., there has been an increase in reported cases of myocarditis and pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination, particularly in male adolescents and young adults age 16 and older. Myocarditis is the inflammation of the heart muscle, while pericarditis is the inflammation of the lining outside the heart. These reports are rare. The CDC is investigating to see if there is any relationship to COVID-19 vaccination.

Of the cases reported, the problem happened more often after the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and typically within several days after COVID-19 vaccination. Most of the people who received care felt better after receiving medicine and resting. Symptoms to watch for include:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart

If you or your child has any of these symptoms within a week of getting a COVID-19 vaccine, seek medical care.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/myocarditis.html>

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**Question: Is it OK to take an over-the-counter pain medication before or after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?**

**Answer:** It isn't recommended that you take a pain medication before getting a COVID-19 vaccine to prevent possible discomfort. It's not clear how these medications might impact the effectiveness of the vaccines. However, it's OK to take this kind of medication after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, as long as you have no other medical reason that would prevent you from taking it.

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**Question: What are the long-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?**

**Answer:** Because COVID-19 vaccines clinical trials only started in the summer of 2020, it's not yet clear if these vaccines will have long-term side effects. However, vaccines rarely cause long-term side effects.

If you are concerned, in the U.S., safety data on COVID-19 vaccines will be reported to a national program called the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. This data is available to the public. The CDC has also created v-safe, a smartphone-based tool that allows users to report COVID-19 vaccine side effects.

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**Question: Can pregnant or breastfeeding women get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**Answer:** If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you may choose to get a COVID-19 vaccine. While further research is needed, early findings suggest that getting an

mRNA COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy poses no serious risks. The findings are based on data from the CDC's coronavirus vaccine safety monitoring system.

If you have concerns, talk to your health care provider about the risks and benefits.

Keep in mind that the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines don't alter your DNA or cause genetic changes. (Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Information about COVID-19 Vaccines for People who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)).

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### **Question: Can I still get COVID-19 after I'm vaccinated?**

**Answer:** COVID-19 vaccination will protect most people from getting sick with COVID-19.

A very small percentage of fully vaccinated people will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the COVID-19 virus. These are called vaccine breakthrough cases. Some people might not experience any symptoms and some people could become sick due to COVID-19.

However, vaccination might make illness less severe. If you are fully vaccinated, the overall risk of hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 is much lower than among unvaccinated people with similar risk factors.

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### **Question: Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine even if I've already had COVID-19**

**Answer:** Getting COVID-19 might offer some natural protection or immunity from reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19. But it's not clear how long this protection lasts. Because reinfection is possible and COVID-19 can cause severe medical complications, it's recommended that people who have already had COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

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### **Question: How long does protection from a COVID-19 vaccine last?**

**Fact:** We don't know how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

Experts are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity. (Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>).

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**Question: If I have an underlying condition, can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

**Fact:** People with underlying medical conditions can receive a COVID-19 vaccine as long as they have not had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. (Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>).

*[Fact Check: RFID microchips will not be injected with the COVID-19 vaccine, altered video features Bill and Melinda Gates and Jack Ma](#)*.

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**Question: What is the concern with the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine?**

**Answer:** Use of the Use of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine might increase the risk of a rare and serious blood clotting disorder. Nearly all of those affected have been women ages 18 to 49, with the disorder happening at a rate of 7 for every 1 million vaccinated women in this age group. For women age 50 and older and men of all ages, the disorder is even more rare.

The FDA and the CDC have recommended that use of the vaccine in the U.S. can continue because the benefits outweigh the risks. If you are given this vaccine, you should be educated about the possible risks and symptoms of a blood clotting problem.

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**Question: Do the COVID-19 Vaccines Protect against the COVID-19 Variants?**

**Answer:** New variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 are spreading in the United States and in other parts of the world. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States offer protection against most variants currently spreading in the United States. However, some variants might cause illness in some people even after they are fully vaccinated.

Evidence is limited on how the new COVID-19 variants will affect how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. CDC will continue to monitor how vaccines are working to see if variants have any impact on how well COVID-19 vaccines work

in real-world conditions. (Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/work.html> ).