

What to Expect When You Get the COVID-19 Vaccine

Talk to your
pharmacist or other
trusted health care
professional if you
have any questions or
need more information
about COVID-19
vaccines.

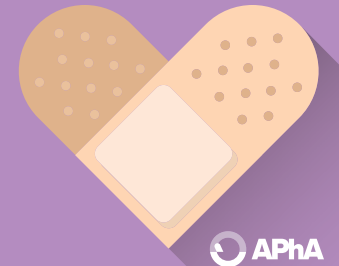


When do I need to get additional shots?

To learn more about current recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines—including booster doses—scan the QR code with your smartphone camera or visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html.

Be sure to bring your vaccination record card with you whenever you receive a shot so the dose can be recorded!

Talk to your pharmacist or other trusted health care professional if you have any questions or need more information about COVID-19 vaccines.



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Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is no different than getting many other vaccines. These tips can make the process even easier.

What vaccines are available?

There are several types of vaccines available for use in the United States to prevent COVID-19:

- > **Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines.** The vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are examples of mRNA vaccines.
- > **Protein subunit vaccines.** The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine is an example of a protein subunit vaccine with an adjuvant. An adjuvant is an ingredient used in some vaccines to help create a stronger immune response in people receiving the vaccine.

What should I know before I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines usually are administered in the deltoid muscle—the big muscle in your upper arm. If possible, wear clothing that allows easy access to the upper part of your arm (for example, a short-sleeved or sleeveless shirt). The vaccine can be administered into either arm.

Some other things to know:

- > Staying hydrated by drinking water before the vaccination can help, especially if you tend to get nervous or dizzy when you get a shot.
- > You should not take an over-the-counter pain reliever or antihistamine to try to prevent vaccine-related side effects or allergic reactions. (If you take those medications regularly for other reasons, you can keep taking them before you get vaccinated.) It is fine to take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or aspirin after you receive the vaccine to help relieve pain and discomfort.

Does the shot hurt?

Yes, for a few seconds. COVID-19 vaccines are administered using a very thin needle. The experience is similar to other vaccines you may have received.

What happens after I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

After you get your first COVID-19 shot, you will receive a vaccination record card stating which vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. Be sure to keep this card in a safe place.

You will be asked to stay at the place where you received the vaccine for at least 15 minutes of observation in case you are one of the rare people who has an allergic reaction to the vaccine. Some people—for example, people who have had allergic reactions to vaccines in the past—may be asked to stay for at least 30 minutes.

While you are waiting, consider enrolling in V-safe using your smartphone! (You also can sign up after you leave at vsafe.cdc.gov.) V-safe is a free tool from the CDC that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. You can use V-safe to report any side effects after vaccination. V-safe also reminds you to get any future vaccine doses.

What are possible side effects after a COVID-19 vaccine?

Common side effects include:

- > Pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where you got the shot.
- > Flu-like symptoms such as tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea.

These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Some people have no side effects. Vaccination protects you from severe COVID-19 infection whether or not you have side effects.

Adverse events that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely rare following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination. If adverse effects occur, they generally happen within 6 weeks of receiving a vaccine dose.

What can I do to relieve side effects?

If your arm hurts, moving it around can help. You also can wet a clean washcloth with cool water and place it over the sore area.

If you feel feverish, drink plenty of fluids—water is best—and wear lightweight clothing.

It is fine to take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or aspirin after you receive the vaccine to help reduce pain and discomfort.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about relieving side effects, or if side effects get worse or don't go away after a few days.