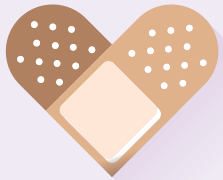


And they will protect you, your loved ones, and your most vulnerable neighbors against COVID-19 illness.

What vaccines are available for the prevention of COVID-19?

There are three vaccines currently available in the United States to prevent COVID-19:

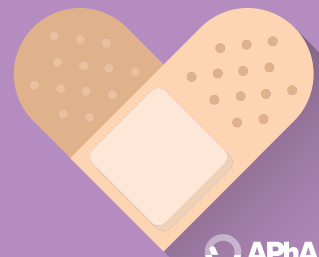
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, an mRNA vaccine that requires two doses administered 3 weeks apart. You are considered to be fully immunized 2 weeks after the second shot.
- The Moderna vaccine, an mRNA vaccine that requires two doses administered 4 weeks apart. You are considered to be fully immunized 2 weeks after the second shot.
- The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, a viral vector vaccine that requires just one dose. You are considered to be fully immunized 2 weeks after that shot.

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

APhA
American Pharmacists Association
For Every Pharmacist. For All of Pharmacy.

www.pharmacist.com

COVID-19 vaccines are effective and safe



APhA
VaccineConfident

COVID-19 vaccines are effective and safe

How could these vaccines be developed so quickly?

Many people don't realize that the COVID-19 vaccines followed the same process and completed all of the same steps that would be used for any new vaccine.

Because it was so important to come up with effective vaccines as quickly as possible, a number of steps that usually would happen one at a time—one after another—were performed at the same time.

Usually, the steps are performed one after another because manufacturers have a lot to lose in the vaccine development process. They can't afford to spend too much money on a vaccine that turns out not to work or not to be safe. So, they wait for results from each step before moving to the next one.

For the COVID-19 vaccines, the federal government spent more than billions of dollars to take away the financial risk and speed up the vaccine development process. The clinical trials involved tens of thousands of volunteers from very many different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and geographic areas. Because the virus is so contagious and widespread, it did not take much time to figure out how effective the vaccines were at protecting people from COVID-19. The pandemic served as the test lab to see how well the vaccines were working.

Also, because of the large financial investment by the federal government, companies began manufacturing vaccine doses much, much earlier than usual—while the clinical trials were still going on. The companies did this with the understanding that the doses would have to be thrown out if the FDA did not authorize the vaccine for emergency use.

Do the vaccines use brand new technology?

No, they don't. The mRNA technology used for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines has been studied since the 1990s. Scientists were already starting to test it in vaccines for other viruses like influenza.

The viral vector technology used for the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine has been studied since the 1970s. Other viral vector vaccines are already used around the world, including one for Ebola virus.

How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

During a dangerous pandemic like COVID-19, the most important role of a vaccine is to keep people from getting severe illness, keep them out of the hospital, and stop them from dying.

By that measure, all three of the available vaccines are highly effective. In fact, all of the vaccines are nearly 100% effective in protecting people from serious illness—hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

All three vaccines also offer some protection from getting sick with COVID-19 at all.

No vaccine is 100% effective at preventing illness. There will always be a very small percentage of fully vaccinated people who still get sick, require hospitalization, or die from COVID-19.

How safe are the COVID-19 vaccines?

The COVID-19 vaccines are amazingly safe.

More than 180 million people in the United States are fully vaccinated. And these vaccines have undergone, and will continue to undergo, the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications. Even mild disease can have long-lasting effects that interfere with your work and personal life.

There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. If you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.

The benefits of getting vaccinated far outweigh the very small risks. And the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any vaccine risk.

APhA
American Pharmacists Association
For Every Pharmacist. For All of Pharmacy.