

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 three vaccines currently available and utilized in the United States to prevent COVID-19:

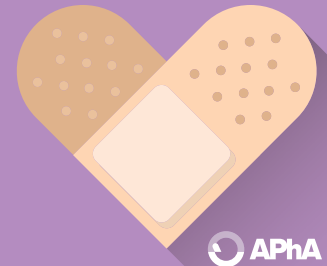
- > The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, an mRNA vaccine that requires two doses. You are considered to be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second dose.
- > The Moderna vaccine, an mRNA vaccine that requires two doses. You are considered to be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second dose.
- > The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, a viral vector vaccine that requires just one dose. You are considered to be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after that dose.

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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What to Expect When You Get the COVID-19 Vaccine



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

The COVID-19 vaccine is administered in the deltoid muscle — the big muscle in your upper arm. If possible, wear clothing that allows easy access to your upper 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 vaccine can be helpful, 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 *before* you receive the vaccine to try to **prevent** vaccine-related side effects or allergic reactions. 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?

COVID-19 vaccines are administered using a very small gauge needle. The experience is similar to other vaccines you may have received.

What happens after I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

After you get a COVID-19 vaccine, 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 may wish to take a photo of the card and store it on your mobile phone.

You will be asked to stay at the site for at least 15 minutes of observation in case you are one of the rare people who has a severe allergic reaction. Some people, like people who have had allergic reactions to vaccines in the past, may be asked to stay for at least 30 minutes for observation.

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 vaccine. 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 muscle pain, chills, fever, and headache.

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. Side effects may be more intense after the second vaccine shot.

Some people have no side effects. Rest assured that the vaccine is still working.

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 light 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 relieve 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.

When do I get the second shot?

If you received the **Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine**, you need to return **3 weeks after the first shot** to get your second shot.

If you received the **Moderna vaccine**, you need to return **4 weeks after the first shot** to get your second shot.

Be sure to bring your vaccination record card with you so the second dose can be recorded!