



Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination



About Vaccines

1 Which lasts longer, immunity after getting COVID-19 or protection from COVID-19 vaccines?

A The protection someone gains from having an infection (called “natural immunity”) varies depending on the severity of the disease, individual immune responses, and the infecting variant. Current evidence suggests that getting sick with the virus again (reinfection) is uncommon in the 90 days after first becoming sick with COVID-19.

Recently, Moderna and Pfizer suggested that immunity for people who receive two doses of their vaccines typically lasts between 4 and 5 months.

2 Why does natural immunity vary depending on the variant of the virus that causes COVID-19?

A As the virus keeps transmitting within the population, it mutates (changes) to evade our immune systems, allowing it to have the possibility to enter the cells and cause disease. These mutations make each variant have slightly different characteristics, including the amount of time that antibodies (our natural defenses) are active after an infection.

3 Why is a booster of the vaccine against COVID-19 recommended?

A Recently, it was recommended that all individuals who received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine get a booster five months after they received their second shot. The CDC also recommends that people who received the J&J vaccine get a booster two months after their single dose. This extra dose “boosts” your immune system to better protect you from COVID-19. Additionally, this booster helps limit transmission of the virus in the community, reducing the risk of new variants.

Let’s remember that it is a very common practice to use booster doses. In fact, most childhood immunizations have booster doses.

Getting Vaccinated

4 Why is it necessary to get a vaccine if we can take other measures, like social distancing or wearing masks, to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19?

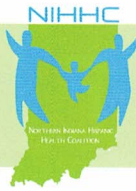
A In order to stop a pandemic, it is necessary to use all of the tools that are available to us. Vaccines are important because they activate an immune response so that our bodies are prepared to fight off the virus if we are ever exposed to it. Wearing a mask that covers both your mouth and nose and maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from others are important ways to help reduce this risk of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. The ultimate protection against COVID-19 is to receive the vaccine in addition to continuing to follow the CDC’s recommendations for protecting yourself and others from COVID-19.

CASES ARE RISING. ACT NOW!





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5 How do I make my appointment to get my COVID-19 vaccine?

A To make your appointment to get the vaccine, visit ourshot.in.gov or call 211. If you are in Elkhart County, call the NIHHC's COVID-19 Hotline at 574-206-3938. Those who are between 5 and 17 years old are only eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine at this time.

6 What can I do now to protect myself if my doctor advises against vaccination due to my immunocompromised state or severe allergies?

A To protect yourself, follow these recommendations:

- Wear a properly fitted N95 mask (it should completely cover your nose and mouth).
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Avoid crowds.
- Wash your hands often.

7 If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

A Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection with COVID-19 is possible, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had a COVID-19 infection. If you were treated for COVID-19 symptoms with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure of what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

8 Will I be required to get vaccinated for work?

A Check with your employer to see if they have any rules that apply to you.

9 What is the Omicron variant, and does the COVID-19 vaccine protect against it?

A The Omicron variant is a different strain of the same coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). It appeared in late November 2021 and it is currently the main strain spreading throughout the U.S. It has been shown that Omicron is four times more contagious than the Delta variant. Even though it is believed that the Omicron variant causes a more mild disease, it can still cause severe illness and even death.

COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including in cases of infection due to the Omicron variant. Vaccines are not 100% effective, and some fully vaccinated people may become infected (called a breakthrough infection). But the vaccines continue to provide the most protection against serious illness and death.

10 Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have gotten 2 doses of the vaccine and a booster?

A Yes, in order to control the transmission of the virus there are several actions that everyone has to take. In addition to every eligible person receiving the recommended doses of the vaccine; using a facemask, especially in public spaces; frequent hand washing; and avoiding close contact with other people can help prevent infection and transmission of the virus in the community.

F A Q

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11 How many shots of the COVID-19 vaccine are needed?

A The currently authorized vaccines to prevent COVID-19 in the United States require 1 or 2 doses. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna require 2 doses. For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, doses should be given 3 weeks (21 days) apart. For the Moderna vaccine, doses should be given 1 month (28 days) apart. For the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, only 1 dose is required.

If you cannot follow the recommended schedule, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines can be scheduled up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose. You should not get the second dose earlier than the recommended wait time.

Vaccine Safety

12 Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

A All of the COVID-19 vaccines being used have gone through rigorous studies to ensure they are as safe as possible. Systems that allow the CDC to watch for safety issues are in place across the entire country. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine in order to be used.

13 Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

A People who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or who are part of a group recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, such as healthcare personnel, may choose to be vaccinated. Preliminary data from the CDC and FDA suggest that there are no safety concerns for pregnant women who have been vaccinated. mRNA vaccines are not considered a risk to breastfeeding infants. If you have questions about getting vaccinated, talking with a healthcare provider can help you make an informed decision.

14 Is it safe for me to get a vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?

A People with underlying medical conditions can receive the COVID-19 vaccines, provided they have not had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. Vaccination is an important consideration for adults of any age with **certain underlying medical conditions** because they are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.

15 Is it safe for children under 5 years old to receive the vaccine?

A Pfizer and Moderna vaccine manufacturers are currently conducting trials in healthy children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years old. So far, studies show that the benefits of the vaccines greatly outweigh potential risks from receiving them, and they may be approved for young children soon. Some heart-related side effects have been reported among young adults and teens, but those cases have been extremely rare (4 cases per 1 million). In fact, they are statistically minimal compared to reported cases of serious health problems that COVID-19 can cause long-term.

16 If I get vaccinated, is there any risk of a severe adverse reaction?

A Allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine may happen, but they are very rare. Representatives from the CDC received reports that some people have experienced severe allergic reactions—also known as anaphylaxis. An allergic reaction is considered severe when a person needs to be treated with epinephrine or an EpiPen®, or if they must go to the hospital. Eleven severe allergic reactions have been reported for every one million people vaccinated with the mRNA vaccines. For the J&J vaccines, 0.5 cases of anaphylaxis have been reported for every one million vaccines administered.

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17 How can I replace my Vaccination Card if I lost it? Is there any other official document that certifies that I am vaccinated?

- A**
1. Go to [IN.gov/access/available-services.html](https://www.in.gov/access/available-services.html)
 2. Click on the “Indiana Vaccination Portal” button.
 3. You will need to create a username (use your email) and password in order to have access to the portal. You will receive a verification code in your email.
 4. Once you have accessed the portal, look for your records by typing your name IN ALL CAPS.
 5. You will find detailed information about each of the doses of the vaccine that you have received.

In this same portal, you may also find your test results if you had a COVID-19 test done, in case you do not have access through your cell phone.

18 What are the common side effects associated with the vaccine?

A The reported side effects for each vaccine are summarized in the table below:

	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson
Injection site reaction	84.1%	91.6%	49.0%
Fatigue	62.9%	68.5%	38.0%
Headache	55.1%	63.0%	39.0%
Muscle Pain	38.3%	59.6%	33.0%
Chills	31.9%	43.4%	
Joint Pain	23.6%	44.8%	
Fever	14.2%		

19 How do I report a problem or bad reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

A It is normal to experience side effects after receiving the vaccine. However, if you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911. It is ideal to wait 15 minutes at the vaccination site, so you will be under close observation in case you have an allergic reaction.

You can report side effects and reactions using v-safe.

V-safe is a new smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines. V-safe uses text messaging and web surveys from the CDC to check in with vaccine recipients following COVID-19 vaccination. **V-safe** also provides second vaccine dose reminders if needed and telephone follow-up to anyone who reports medically significant adverse events.