Talking to Family and Friends About COVID-19 Vaccination

What We Know About The COVID-19 Virus and Vaccines

The virus that causes COVID-19 has mutated throughout the pandemic, resulting in many variants that are different from the virus's original form.[1] Vaccines are updated to specifically address the changing COVID-19 virus and protect against variants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone ages 6 months and older stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination to help protect against circulating COVID-19 variants.[2] There are three COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized and/or approved for use in the United States, including two mRNA (Moderna and Pfizer) options and one protein subunit (Novavax) option.

I've read about side effects in people who have gotten a COVID-19 vaccination. How can I trust that COVID-19 vaccines are safe?

Hundreds of millions of people in the United States have safely received a COVID-19 vaccine.[3] There are three COVID-19 vaccines available, and all have been found to be safe and effective using the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) gold standard regulatory process which includes research, multi-stage clinical trials, robust regulatory review and approvals, and ongoing safety monitoring. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

Side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine can vary person to person, but generally go away in a few days and tend to be mild and temporary, like those experienced after many other routine vaccinations.[4] Common side effects can include pain and swelling on the arm where the shot was given, nausea, headache, chills, or fever. These side effects are all normal signs that the body is building protection and should go away in a few days. However, even if you do not experience any side effects, you are still building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19.

If I've already been infected with COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?

Yes, individuals who have recovered from a COVID-19 infection should still get vaccinated to build your immune response and protect against re-infection from circulating variants. Research shows that recovered COVID-19 patients who choose not to get vaccinated are twice as likely to get COVID-19 again compared with those who were vaccinated after their recovery.

People who recently had COVID-19 may consider delaying their next vaccine dose by three months from when symptoms started, or, if asymptomatic, three months from when they first received a positive test.[5]

Should my child receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Children are just as likely to be infected with COVID-19 as adults. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 can help prevent severe illness including hospitalization, and give parents greater confidence in participating in school, daycare, and other activities.[7] Learn more about what to expect after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine for young children here.

Do I have to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine?

No, nearly all private and public health insurance plans cover all vaccines recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)—which includes COVID-19 vaccines—free of cost. Adults without insurance may be able to access vaccines free of cost through patient assistance programs or state health departments.

For children, all vaccines recommended by ACIP—including the COVID-19 vaccine— are covered free of cost by all private and public insurance plans cover. Children (18 years old and under) who are uninsured or otherwise unable to afford the cost of vaccines, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native Children can access vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which is a federally funded program that provides vaccines free of costs to children who qualify. Children who qualify for the VFC program can access vaccines free of cost by visiting a provider enrolled in the VFC program or through a public health clinic, a federally qualified health center (FQHC), or a rural health clinic.

For more information on vaccine costs and coverage, click here.

Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Pharmacies: Most major pharmacies offer many recommended vaccines for adults. Check with your pharmacy to see what vaccines they stock and if you need to make a vaccination appointment. Vaccines.gov features a pharmacy lookup tool to help you find a pharmacy near you.

Healthcare Provider's Office: If you have a primary healthcare provider, you can schedule an appointment to discuss staying up to date with your flu and COVID-19 vaccines – and get vaccinated.

State and Local Health Departments: State and local health departments are a great resource for learning where you can get flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Additionally, some health departments may offer free or low-cost vaccines for those who are uninsured, as well as information about vaccine recommendations and eligibility.[6]

Where To Get More Information About COVID-19 Vaccinations

When sharing information with your family and friends, get the facts from reliable, trusted sources such as:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Staying Up To Date with COVID-19 Vaccines**[8]

- **Champions for Vaccine Education, Equity and Progress,** cveep.org

- **State health departments** (many states have unique hubs on their websites that contain COVID-specific information)

- **Health care providers** can provide guidance that is specific to your individual health status.

[1] https://cveep.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/CVEEP_Glossary_Science_of_Viruses_EN_FINAL.pdf
[2] https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/s-t0627-vaccine-recommendations.html
[3] https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/s-t0627-vaccine-recommendations.html
[4] https://www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/getting-your-covid-19-vaccine.html
[5] https://www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html
[6] https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/index.html
[7] https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children/6-things-to-know.html
[8] https://www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html