

COVID-19 Vaccine: Frequently Asked Questions



1. **How many COVID-19 vaccines are under development?**
 - a. Multiple COVID-19 vaccines are under development. As of November 4, 2020, four vaccines have begun large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials in the United States.¹
2. **What is the status of Pfizer's vaccine?**
 - a. On Monday, November 9th, Pfizer announced that its COVID-19 vaccine may be 90% effective based on early test results. Pfizer is now on track to apply later this month for emergency-use approval from the FDA. Read more on this here: [AP News: Pfizer says COVID-19 vaccine is looking 90% effective.](#)
3. **What is the status of Moderna's vaccine?**
 - a. On Monday, November 16th, the biotech company Moderna, Inc. announced that its experimental vaccine was 94.5% effective in preventing disease, according to an analysis of its clinical trial. Read more about this announcement here: [NPR News: Moderna's COVID-19 Vaccine Shines in Clinical Trial.](#)
4. **How are the CDC and FDA ensuring that the vaccine is safe?**
 - a. The U.S. vaccine system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Visit the CDC website here to read about clinical trials, vaccine safety monitoring, expanded safety monitoring systems, and much more: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>
5. **When will a COVID-19 vaccine be available in the United States?**
 - a. The goal for [Operation Warp Speed](#) is to deliver safe vaccines that work, with the first supply becoming available before the end of 2020. When a vaccine is authorized or approved in the United States, there may not be enough doses available for all adults. Supplies will increase over time, and all adults should be able to get vaccinated later in 2021. However, a COVID-19 vaccine may not be available for children until more studies are completed.¹
6. **What's Operation Warp Speed? What is their role with the COVID-19 vaccine?**
 - a. Operation Warp Speed is a partnership among components of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense to help develop, make, and distribute millions of vaccine doses for COVID-19 as quickly as possible while ensuring that the vaccines are safe and that they work.¹
 - i. HHS [Fact Sheet: Explaining Operation Warp Speed](#)
 - ii. New England Journal of Medicine article: [Developing Safe and Effective COVID Vaccines — Operation Warp Speed's Strategy and Approach](#)
7. **Why would a vaccine be needed if we can do other things, like social distancing and wearing masks, to prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading?**

- a. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like wearing masks and social distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations [to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from COVID-19.¹

8. If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?

- a. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Until we have a vaccine available and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices makes recommendations to CDC on how to best use COVID-19 vaccines, CDC cannot comment on whether people who had COVID-19 should get a COVID-19 vaccine.¹

9. Will there be enough vaccine for everyone?

- a. When FDA first authorizes or approves the use of one or more COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, there may be a limited supply. This would mean that not everyone will be able to be vaccinated right away. It is understandable how concerning this would be for people, especially for [those who are at increased risk for serious illness](#) from this virus and for their loved ones.¹
- b. That is why, early in the response, the [federal government began investing in select vaccine manufacturers](#) to help them increase their ability to quickly make and distribute a large amount of COVID-19 vaccine. This will allow the United States to start with as much vaccine as possible and continually increase the supply in the weeks and months to follow. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as large quantities are available. Several thousand vaccination providers will be available, including doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, and federally qualified health centers.¹

10. How is the CDC working to make sure people want to and can get vaccinated once a COVID-19 vaccine is available?

- a. CDC is working with partners across the country to make sure people have the information they need to be confident in deciding to get vaccinated. Key priorities for CDC are:
 - i. **Regularly sharing clear and accurate information** with people to make sure they understand the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated and can make informed decisions.
 - ii. **Helping healthcare personnel feel confident** in their decision to get a COVID-19 vaccine and **helping healthcare providers** answer their patients' questions about the vaccine.
 - iii. **Engaging communities and individuals in an equitable and inclusive way** to ensure that people have opportunities to ask questions and get clear, accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- b. Easy access to COVID-19 vaccines is equally critical. CDC is working with public health, healthcare providers, and other partners to make sure people can easily get a COVID-19 vaccine and that cost is not a barrier.¹

11. Who will have access to the COVID-19 vaccine first?

- a. At first, there may be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. Operation Warp Speed will work to get those first vaccine doses out once a vaccine is authorized or approved and recommended, rather than waiting until there is enough vaccine for everyone. However, it is important that the initial supplies of vaccine are given to people in a fair, ethical, and transparent way.¹
- b. There is an anticipated phased-in approach to the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine which is still working through final development. The first part of Phase 1 would include health care workers, and the latter part of Phase 1 would include persons with underlying conditions that put them at a higher risk of severe disease or death, including those in populated settings.
- c. Learn how [CDC is making COVID-19 vaccine recommendations](#), including recommendations if there is a limited supply, based on input from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).¹

12. How does getting a vaccine help others?

- a. When someone is vaccinated, they are very likely to be protected against the targeted disease. But not everyone can be vaccinated. People with underlying health conditions that weaken their immune systems (such as cancer or HIV) or who have severe allergies to some vaccine components may not be able to get vaccinated with certain vaccines. These people can still be protected if they live in and amongst others who are vaccinated. When a lot of people in a community are vaccinated the pathogen has a hard time circulating because most of the people it encounters are immune. So the more that others are vaccinated, the less likely people who are unable to be protected by vaccines are at risk of even being exposed to the harmful pathogens. This is called herd immunity.² Read more from WHO on this here: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/how-do-vaccines-work>

13. Who is paying for the COVID-19 vaccine?

- a. Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund.¹

¹ Information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

² Information provided by the World Health Organization:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/how-do-vaccines-work>

