

This running FAQ document will be updated each Wednesday.

Latest update: December 30, 2020

- Language updates in green font
- New Questions

General COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

What can I do to prevent getting COVID-19 until I can get the vaccine?

Practice social distancing, wear a mask when around others, wash your hands, avoid being around others who are sick. For more information about protecting yourself visit the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov).

➤ ***Why should I consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine?***

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the best and safest way to become immune to COVID-19. Getting the vaccine will help your immune system build protection against the virus in case you are exposed in the future. Even though catching the virus may be another way to build protection, this is dangerous because you could get very sick or even die. You can also spread the virus to others when you are sick. The COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19 and are a safe way to become protected from the virus.

If I tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, do I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people who have already been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 90 days may choose to delay getting the vaccine because getting sick with COVID-19 again is unlikely during that time. However, there is no harm in getting the vaccine if you have already had COVID-19. You may also choose to wait to get the vaccine in order to allow those who are more high-risk to be vaccinated.

If the vaccine is a two dose vaccine, how will I know when to get the second dose?

When you receive the vaccine you will receive a card with the date of your first dose, the name/manufacturer of the vaccine received and the date on which you should receive your second dose. Your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine must be from the same product name/manufacturer as you're the first dose. We recommend when you receive your card, take a picture as a back-up, add the date to your calendar, and download the v-safe app. The v-safe app can remind you when it's time to receive your second dose.

How long do I have to wait between receiving the flu vaccine (or any other vaccine) and the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pfizer and Moderna

vaccine series should be given alone with a minimum time of 14 days before or after any other vaccines. If the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is given within 14 days of another vaccine by mistake, doses do not need to be repeated for either vaccine.

After I receive the COVID-19 vaccine, can I stop wearing a mask?

No. It will still be important to continue to follow public health recommendations to protect themselves and others. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, and washing hands often.

If I get symptoms shortly after I've been vaccinated, should I get tested?

If you have symptoms shortly after receiving the vaccine, these symptoms do not mean you have developed COVID-19 from the vaccine. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may feel like flu and may even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. For more information about symptoms after receiving the vaccine you can view the CDC's [What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine fact sheet](#).

I have heard the Pfizer vaccine is not recommended for children under the age of 16 and the Moderna vaccine is not recommended for children under the age of 18. Will children have the option to be vaccinated?

The FDA has issued emergency use authorization for Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, but there are other COVID-19 vaccines in development. A clear timeframe is not known at this time for when children will be recommended to get the vaccine. Pfizer added children under the age of 12 to their clinical trials in November, so we hope to learn more about this sometime next year as clinical trials progress.

Vaccine Safety and How it Works

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Yes! These vaccines have already been given to tens of thousands of volunteers and have been shown to be safe and very good at preventing them from getting sick with COVID-19. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. The vaccine will continue to be monitored to make sure any rare problems are found as soon as possible and studied to see if they were caused by the vaccine.

Will the COVID-19 vaccines cause allergic reactions?

Very rarely, severe allergic reactions have been reported in persons receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. While these reactions are being studied, it is advised that people with severe allergic reactions to injected or infused medications or vaccines in the past be observed for a minimum of 30 minutes after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. [People with allergies to foods, animals,](#)

venom, environmental dusts or pollens or pill medicines have not been shown to have any bad reaction from the COVID-19 vaccines.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine infect me with the virus?

No. None of the vaccines currently being developed in the United States contain the virus, so there is no possibility of the vaccine infecting someone with the COVID-19. Some people who receive the vaccine will develop arm soreness or redness, fever, headache, chills, and fatigue as their immune system responds. These symptoms typically go away after a day or two.

How does the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine work?

These vaccines work by giving your body the recipe to make the protein that is on the outside of the coronavirus. When your body sees that protein, it will make protective antibodies to it. Later, if the body sees the real virus, it will remember seeing that protein and destroy the virus before it has a chance to make you sick.

After receiving the vaccine, when will I be immune from COVID-19?

We have learned from clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people who took the vaccine that the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective at preventing illness from COVID-19 after 14 days from the second dose of vaccine, and Moderna is 94.5% effective at preventing illness from COVID-19 after 14 days from the second dose of vaccine. You must get both doses to have the best protection against the virus.

If I get sick with COVID-19 after the first dose of the vaccine but before getting the second dose of the vaccine, what do I do about the second dose?

You should still plan to receive the second dose after you recover from your COVID-19 illness *and* after you finish your isolation period for COVID-19 infection (for most people, this will be 10 days after symptoms started or positive COVID-19 test, and no fever for 24 hours). Note that the second dose of vaccine should still be no sooner than the recommended waiting period for the second dose (21 days for the Pfizer vaccine, 28 days for the Moderna vaccine).

Questions about Vaccine Phases

How do I know which "Phase" I am in so I know when I can get the vaccine?

Supply of COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. is limited right now. Tennessee's COVID-19 Pandemic Vaccination Plan is designed with phases to help distribute the vaccine as fairly as possible. You can read this plan and find more information about COVID-19 vaccination phases in TN [here](#).

I am not in Phase 1a1. How do I get on the list to receive vaccine?

There is **no list** maintained by the Tennessee Department of Health for vaccine distribution.

Vaccine will be distributed in “Phases” according to the [TN Vaccination Plan](#). When the time for your phase arrives, more information will be available.

Who decides the Phases and how the vaccine is distributed?

The TN Department of Health, in partnership with the State Government and the TN COVID-19 Pandemic Vaccine Stakeholder Group, has developed a vaccination plan based upon the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine’s Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine and the CDC’s Playbook for Jurisdictions. You can read Tennessee’s Vaccination Plan and find more information about COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).

Why am I not in a higher priority phase and eligible to receive vaccine sooner?

While COVID-19 vaccine supplies are limited, Tennessee’s vaccination plan focuses on providing vaccines to those at highest risk of becoming infected with the virus and suffering from life-threatening disease. We will work as quickly as possible to provide vaccines to Tennesseans according to the phased approach set out in the state’s plan, which is posted [here](#). As vaccine supplies become increasingly available, we look forward to accelerating through our priority phases to cover the maximum number of Tennesseans in the shortest time possible.

Questions about Where / How to Get the Vaccine

How do I get the vaccine if I am in Phase 1a1?

Most people in Phase 1a1 will receive vaccine through their employer, through events planned by their local or regional department of health, or through vaccination strike teams deployed across the state. Please look for communications from your local health department or ask about details from your employer about vaccination events. More information about various locations to get the vaccine for phase 1a1 will also be made publicly available as soon as possible

Long term care facilities will be vaccinated through the federal partnership with Walgreens and CVS, through agreements with local pharmacies, or through vaccination strike teams deployed across the state.

If I fall into Phase 1a2, where and when can I receive the vaccine?

Vaccines for those in Phase 1a2 (for example, outpatient medical providers) will be made available at local health departments and through partnerships with other local hospitals, business or community partners. Some counties will move through the Phases at different paces because there are different numbers of people in each Phase in our TN counties. More information about various locations to get the vaccine for this Phase will be made publicly available as soon as possible.

I am an employee that works or volunteers in a hospital and I have direct patient exposure or contact with potentially infectious materials. Where do I get the vaccine?

Talk with your employer/supervisor at the hospital.

I provide home healthcare services and have direct contact with patients. Where do I get the vaccine?

Talk with your home health agency supervisor.

If you're a supervisor/director of a home health agency seeking to organize a vaccination event for your staff, please contact your local or regional health department to learn of their plan for vaccination of Phase 1a1.

I am a first responder with direct public exposure/interaction with the public. Where do I get the vaccine?

Your local or regional health department or local emergency management agency will be reaching out to your employer to let them know when COVID-19 vaccine will be available to you. First responders will receive vaccine through their local or regional department of health.

I am an employer of healthcare workers, but we are not connected to any specific hospital. How do I get the vaccine to my employees?

Phase 1a1 groups not associated with a hospital will receive vaccine through events planned by their local or regional department of health. Please watch for communications from them about upcoming vaccination events.

Questions about Pregnant and Breastfeeding Populations

Should I receive the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people based on [what we know now](#). Additionally, pregnant people with COVID-19 might be at increased risk for other adverse outcomes, such as preterm birth. Currently there are no studies on safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women to inform vaccine recommendations. ACIP has stated that pregnant and lactating women **may** receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. A conversation between you and your healthcare provider may help with the decision about taking the vaccine.

Should I receive the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine if I am planning to get pregnant?

There is no recommendation for pregnancy testing before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after a Pfizer or Moderna

COVID-19 vaccination.

Is there any reason to choose one vaccine over another if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

At this time, we only know specifics around the Pfizer vaccine, although it is likely that some vaccines will have advantages over others in specific populations. ACIP has advised that pregnant and lactating women **may** receive the Pfizer vaccine. A conversation between you and your healthcare provider may help with the decision about taking the vaccine.

Should I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am breastfeeding?

There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in breastfeeding people or the effects of mRNA vaccines (like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine) on breastfed infants. mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. A lactating person who is part of a group recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., healthcare personnel) may choose to be vaccinated. A conversation between you and your healthcare provider may help with the decision about taking the vaccine.

Who will be eligible to get the vaccine?

Phase 3 clinical trials are ongoing and will determine which vaccines will be appropriate for public use. As of December 2020, only one vaccine in Phase 3 clinical trials has enrolled children and none of the trials currently involve women who are pregnant. Other restrictions may be identified based on data resulting from the Phase 3 trials.

Monitoring Side Effects after Vaccine

I heard there is a monitoring program for COVID-19 vaccines? How can I participate in this program?

It's called V-SAFE, and it's a smart-phone based monitoring program. It uses text messaging and web surveys to check-in with vaccine recipients after vaccination. Participants would report side effects and health impact events after the COVID-19 vaccination. Depending on your answer, someone from CDC may call to check on you and gather more information. V-safe will also remind you when it's time to receive your second dose if one is needed. Before receiving the vaccine, you will receive an information sheet from your healthcare provider with v-safe information and a link to register.