



## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions November 15, 2021

**New/Updated Information is highlighted in yellow.**

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## General Vaccine Information

### **Is a COVID-19 vaccine necessary?**

COVID-19 can be a minor illness in some or lead to severe disease or even death in previously healthy people. This means, everyone should take the virus seriously! It is believed that the more people who get vaccinated, the less sickness will be in our communities.

Many treatments and medications are being studied, but there is no cure. Prevention is key. Vaccination is an important step in helping to prevent this illness and its potentially devastating consequences.

### **What vaccines are approved or authorized for use?**

The following are the COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States:

- Pfizer/BioNTech/ Comirnaty
- Moderna
- Johnson & Johnson's Janssen

For current information on the types and use of COVID-19 vaccines available, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html>.

### **What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?**

An EUA is used to help make medical products available as quickly as possible by allowing unapproved medical products to reach patients in need when there are no adequate, food and drug administration (FDA) approved and available alternatives. The known and potential benefits of the product must outweigh the known and potential risks of the product to grant an EUA. Learn more about the EUA process by watching the following video,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGkwaESsGBQ>.

### **What is the difference between emergency use authorization and full approval?**

In an emergency when lives are at risk, like a pandemic, it may not be possible to have all the evidence that the FDA would usually have before approving a vaccine or drug. If there's evidence that strongly suggests that patients have benefited from a treatment, the agency can issue an EUA to make it available. For the COVID-19 vaccines, FDA required two months of safety and efficacy data before the EUA was granted. That included clinical trials with tens of thousands of people and rigorous testing and review, and all the vaccines continue to be closely monitored. Compared to emergency use authorization, FDA approval of vaccines requires even more data on safety, manufacturing, and effectiveness over longer periods of time and includes real-world data.

### **How many shots of COVID vaccine will be needed?**

**For the primary doses**, both Pfizer and Moderna require two shots. In general, it is recommended to receive **two doses** of the **same** vaccine.

The J&J vaccine is only one dose.

Moderately to severely immunocompromised people who are 12 years and older and received a Pfizer-BioNTech primary series or 18 years and older and received a Moderna primary series should receive an additional primary dose of the same vaccine at least 28 days after their second dose.

Nearly 4 million New Jersey residents are currently eligible for a booster dose. Heterologous (mix and match) booster doses can be used (see Considerations for use of a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose for more details).

For current information on the types and use of COVID-19 vaccines available, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html>.

### **Why should children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Although children are at a lower risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19 compared with adults, children can

- Be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19
- Get very sick from COVID-19
- Have both short and long-term health complications from COVID-19
- Spread COVID-19 to others

Children with underlying medical conditions are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared with children without underlying medical conditions. Children who get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can also develop serious complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C)—a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs.

Children ages 5 years and older are able to get an age-appropriate dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html>.

### **Is there a cost for COVID-19 vaccines?**

COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone at no cost. Vaccines were paid for with taxpayer dollars and will be given to all people living in the United States, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

### **I lost my COVID-19 vaccination card. How can I get a copy to show proof I received the vaccine?**

If you lost your COVID-19 vaccination card, you may ask the vaccination site to provide you with another COVID-19 card, however, not all sites provide this service and some locations have closed. Another option is to ask your healthcare provider to print your official immunization

record. Please ask your healthcare provider to include the COVID-19 vaccine lot number in case you will need that information in the future. The official record will list all vaccines that you have received and the date you received those vaccines.

Another option is for individuals to download the Docket mobile app (COVID-19 vaccines only), which is available in the [App store](#) or on [Google Play](#) in English or Spanish depending on Smartphone settings, or submit a request to NJIIS. For specific instructions, visit <https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#/requestImmunizationRecord>.

### **Has there been a change with the NJIIS opt-in process?**

Yes, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order (EO 207) to change NJIIS from an opt-in to an opt-out system. If someone chooses to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, their doses will be automatically entered into NJIIS. For more information, please visit [https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/njiis\\_executive.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/njiis_executive.pdf). [Providers are required to enter all administered COVID-19 doses into NJIIS.](#)

Although Governor Murphy signed legislation on June 4, 2021, to end the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Administration can retain the tools necessary to manage the ongoing threat posed by the pandemic. There are 14 executive orders including EO207, that will remain in place through January 1, 2022, though they can be modified or rescinded prior to that date by the Governor. For further information, please visit <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210604b.shtml>.

## Vaccine Availability

### **How can I schedule an appointment to get vaccinated?**

There are multiple ways to get an appointment including:

1. Use the [NJ Vaccine Appointment Finder](#) to find vaccination locations near you with available appointments.
2. Attend a [pop-up or mobile vaccination event](#) in your community.
3. Register with the [NJ Vaccine Scheduling System](#) to be notified when an appointment is available to you at vaccine locations that use the State's Vaccine Scheduling System. **If you need assistance registering with the NJVSS, please call 855-568-0545.**
4. Seniors 65+ can call the senior-specific hotline at 856-249-7007 from 8am to 8pm to schedule dedicated vaccine appointments
5. Veterans, their spouses, and their caregivers may be eligible for vaccines through the VA. [Learn more here.](#)

*Note: Please verify requirements with a vaccination site before visiting or making an appointment. Some require proof of residency within a specific county or municipality. In addition, 5 to 17-year-olds must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to be*

*vaccinated, and can only receive the Pfizer vaccine at this time under the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization.*

### **How can you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you are homebound?**

If you are unable to leave the home to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or are the healthcare provider or family caregiver of someone who is homebound, you may request an in-home vaccination appointment by completing a form at [covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax](https://covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax) (English) or [covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax-es](https://covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax-es) (Spanish).

For assistance completing the form by phone, please call the **NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center at 1-855-568-0545**.

### **Can you tell me more about the NJVSS? Is my information private?**

The NJ Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) is a secure online website developed by the NJ Dept. of Health for public health purposes. The NJVSS is a system that allows you to sign-up to make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

You will be asked to provide personal information (name, address, gender, race, and email), medical screening and occupation information. This helps to determine your eligibility for the vaccine or more importantly, which phase best fits you! NJVSS will send you e-mail reminders about your appointment and reminders about getting the second dose. The NJVSS also lets you make an appointment at a vaccination location most convenient for you.

The information collected on the NJVSS is used for public health purposes only AND to ensure that same person returns for the second dose of the same vaccine. For more information visit, <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine> and <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>.

### **How do people prove that they are eligible for vaccination?**

A person is eligible if they live, work, or are being educated in New Jersey and can self-identify as meeting the criteria for the current sub-phase. No professional or medical documentation is required.

### **Where can I find information on public transportation to vaccine locations?**

Through the Department's VAXRIDE initiative, NJ TRANSIT supports New Jerseyans in their efforts to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Visit <https://www.njtransit.com/vaxride> to find vaccination sites that are conveniently served by NJ TRANSIT bus, train and light rail routes.

In addition, NJ 211 is offering free rides to and from vaccination sites in partnership with United Way Worldwide and Lyft. Rides are available wherever Lyft operates in New Jersey and is available to everyone including those with collapsible wheelchairs and walkers. To request a free ride, call 211 or text 898-211, or visit 211 to learn more.

### **I received my COVID-19 vaccine outside the United States. Are these doses valid?**

Whether you need to be revaccinated will depend on the type of vaccine you received and if it is FDA-authorized or listed as emergency use by the World Health Organization. Talk to your doctor about whether your vaccine doses are accepted or will require revaccination.

## Safety Concerns

### **Are COVID-19 vaccines safe even though they were developed rapidly?**

The vaccines were able to be developed rapidly because of the following:

- Vaccines have already been created for coronaviruses similar to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), so a lot of the work was already done.
- All vaccines have gone through the same steps to show safety and effectiveness.
- Many steps occurred at the same time (e.g., vaccines were being made while testing was taking place). No steps were skipped.
- Collaboration between medical experts and researchers, along with plentiful funding helped to bring vaccines to the public sooner

COVID-19 vaccines are **safe and effective**. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

For more information and to view a video about vaccine safety, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>.

### **What are some of the vaccine side effects?**

The most common side effects are injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, and joint pain. Some people in the clinical trials have reported fever. Side effects are more common after the second dose; younger adults, who have more robust immune systems, reported more side effects than older adults.

As people get vaccinated, CDC, FDA, and other federal partners will use the following existing, robust systems and data sources to conduct ongoing safety monitoring. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>.

### **Where can I learn more about vaccine safety and how to report a side effect?**

There are different systems in place to monitor vaccine safety, including the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System <https://vaers.hhs.gov/index.html> and the smart phone app, v-safe. Your doctor will provide you with information to register for v-safe. Additional information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>.

### **Should people who are pregnant or breastfeeding receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes! COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccine and common myths, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

## Protection from Vaccine/Efficacy

### Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?

COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of COVID-19 and its potentially severe complications. All COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use in the United States helped protect people against COVID-19, including severe illness, in clinical trial settings. Recent studies have shown

Unvaccinated people have:

- **6.1x** greater risk of **testing positive** for COVID-19
- **11.3x** greater risk of **dying** from COVID-19

compared to *fully* vaccinated people.

For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/index.html>

### If I had COVID-19 and recovered do I need to get the vaccine?

Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible—although rare—that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again. A [recent study](#) found that those who were previously infected with COVID-19 had a greater chance of reinfection if they were unvaccinated. Learn more about [why getting vaccinated is a safer way to build protection](#) than getting infected.

Anyone **currently** infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the [criteria](#) to discontinue isolation. Talk to your doctor if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### I had COVID less than 90 days ago, can I get the vaccine?

Yes, you may get the vaccine unless you received monoclonal antibodies within the last 90 days. If you received monoclonal antibody therapy for COVID-19, you should wait for 90 days after the treatment. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### I am fully vaccinated, but tested positive for COVID-19, how is that possible?

Yes, it is possible to test positive for COVID-19 even if you are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines in the US are highly effective, including against the Delta variant, but they are not 100% effective and some fully vaccinated people will become infected (called a breakthrough infection) and experience illness. For such people, the vaccine still provides them strong protection against serious illness and death.

Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the Delta variant. However, fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others. To reduce their risk of becoming infected with the Delta variant and potentially spreading it to others: CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people:

- Wear a mask in public indoor settings if they are in an area of [substantial or high transmission](#).
- Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If you came into [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 get tested 5-7 days after the date of your exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result.
- Isolate if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days or are experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Follow any applicable federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.

CDC will continue to monitor variants to see if they have any impact on how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. For more information about variants, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html#vaccinated>.

## Masking and Vaccine Requirements

### **What are New Jersey's masking guidelines?**

In New Jersey, face masks are no longer required in most outdoor and indoor settings. Face masks, social distancing, and other safety measures are still required in high-risk areas such as [schools](#), [healthcare settings](#), [public transportation](#), [child care centers](#), [correctional facilities](#), and homeless shelters.

In addition, businesses may continue to require face coverings for employees, customers, and guests. Businesses are not permitted to restrict the use of face masks by their staff, customers, or visitors.

The majority of State offices open to the public, including New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission locations, continue to require masking of staff and visitors.

*Note: There are exceptions for face masks for children under two years old, when individuals need to briefly remove face coverings for religious reasons, and when wearing a mask would endanger one's health. For more information, refer to [Executive Order No. 242](#).*

Visit the [NJ COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for the latest guidance.

### **What employees are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or weekly testing?**

New Jersey has announced that all workers in preschool to Grade 12 schools, all workers in certain health care facilities and high-risk congregate settings, all workers at state agencies, authorities, and colleges and universities and all child care workers will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or be subject to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times per week.

- As of September 7th, 2021, all workers in **certain state and private health care facilities and high-risk congregate settings** were required to be fully vaccinated or subjected to testing.
- As of October 18th, 2021, all workers in **preschool through Grade 12 schools** were required to be fully vaccinated or subject to testing.
- As of October 18th, 2021, all workers at **state agencies, authorities, and colleges and universities** were required to be fully vaccinated or subject to testing.
- As of November 1st, 2021, all workers in all **child care facilities** are required to be fully vaccinated or subject to ongoing weekly testing.
- The federal government has announced plans to require vaccination for workers in most **health care settings, federal executive branch employees, and all federal contractors** and to require vaccination or testing for all workers at **businesses with 100 or more employees**.

Most recently, Governor Murphy today signed Executive Order [No. 271](#), which requires new and potential state contractors to demonstrate that all of their employees who enter, work at, or provide services in any state agency location are fully vaccinated or otherwise undergo weekly testing.

These requirements will strengthen protections against the spread of COVID-19, including the highly transmissible Delta variant, to those who work with vulnerable populations such as those who can't receive the COVID-19 vaccine for medical or religious purposes or those who are too young to be vaccinated. For more information, visit [COVID-19 vaccine requirement](#).

### **Can an employer access an employee's COVID-19 vaccination records in the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS) to verify their vaccination status?**

No, an employer cannot access an employee's vaccination records that are maintained in the NJIS for the purpose of verifying the employee's vaccinations for employment.

An authorized NJIS user's access to information in the NJIS is limited by law, namely N.J.S.A. 26:4-131 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 8:57, subchapter 3. The statutes and rules provide that NJIS users shall only access an individual's vaccination information in the NJIS if they have

claimed the individual in NJIIS as their patient and/or if the user is currently providing healthcare services to the individual. The statutes and rules further provide that a child care center, school, college or university shall only access an individual's immunization information in the NJIIS if they have enrolled or are in the process of enrolling the individual in their institution.

Because the statutes and rules do not permit an employer to verify an employee's vaccination status in NJIIS, employers should have employees submit vaccination documentation for verification. Please see [COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation FAQs](#) for more details on valid vaccine documentation.

**All authorized users should review the statute and regulations to ensure use is consistent with existing laws.** The NJIIS is the official Immunization Registry pursuant to the Statewide Immunization Registry Act – N.J.S.A. 26:4-131 et seq. (P.L. 2004, c. 138), N.J.A.C. 8:57, subchapter 3.

## Other Vaccines

### **Can you receive COVID-19 at the same time as other vaccines?**

COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered on the same day. Currently it is unknown if there is a potential for increased reactions when COVID-19 is given with other vaccines. Speak with your healthcare provider to determine what works best for you.

### **Will getting the flu vaccine protect me against coronavirus?**

No. Influenza viruses and coronaviruses are different. Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19; however, the vaccine can reduce flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and can help to conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources during the pandemic.

It's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter, making it more important than ever to get a flu vaccine! It is the best way to protect yourself and others – especially those who are particularly vulnerable to both COVID-19 and influenza such as older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

For more information about flu, visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/> or <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.

## Treatment Options

### **What are monoclonal antibodies?**

Antibodies are proteins that people's bodies make to fight viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19. Antibodies made in a laboratory act a lot like natural antibodies to limit the amount of virus in your body. They are called monoclonal antibodies. Antibody treatment can be used by people with mild to moderate COVID-19 who:

- Test positive for SARS-CoV-2.
- Are within 10 days of the start of their symptoms.
- Are age 12 or older and weigh at least 88 pounds.
- Are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 or of needing to be admitted to a hospital because of COVID-19.

For questions about whether you can and should get antibody treatment, call your doctor or health care provider

More information about monoclonal antibody treatment can be found at the following websites:

[https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_community.shtml#3](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml#3) and  
<https://combatcovid.hhs.gov/>  
[https://combatcovid.hhs.gov/i-have-covid-19-now/monoclonal-antibodies-high-risk-covid-19-positive-patients?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzLTXveW37wIVTuDICH2k3g2kEAAAYASAAEgl-jvD\\_BwE](https://combatcovid.hhs.gov/i-have-covid-19-now/monoclonal-antibodies-high-risk-covid-19-positive-patients?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzLTXveW37wIVTuDICH2k3g2kEAAAYASAAEgl-jvD_BwE)

## Additional Information

- [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_vaccination.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml)
- [covid19.nj.gov/](https://covid19.nj.gov/)
- [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine)
- [covid19.nj.gov/finder](https://covid19.nj.gov/finder) (search for vaccine appointments)
- COVID-19 Hotline 1-800-962-1253 or 2-1-1 (**for information only. NOT for scheduling vaccine appointments**)
- Call [855-568-0545](tel:855-568-0545) for assistance with the NJ Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) and vaccine appointment support.
- Call 856-249-7007 to get appointment assistance for seniors 65 and older.