

COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

Why should I consider vaccination against COVID-19?

The severity of COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild to severe. Some people may have only a few symptoms, and some people may have no symptoms at all. Some people may experience worsened symptoms, such as worsened shortness of breath and pneumonia, about a week after symptoms start. More than 1 in 200 North Dakotans have been hospitalized due to COVID-19. Even those with mild illness can have symptoms that persist for months.

People who are older have a higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and the risk increases with age. People who have existing medical conditions also may have a higher risk of serious illness.

What vaccines are available and how effective are they?

Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson have vaccines available. In clinical trials:

- Pfizer was reported to be 95% effective and Moderna was reported to be 94.1% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infection.
- Johnson & Johnson was reported to be 66% effective in preventing moderate/severe.
- Real world studies are also showing these vaccines to be highly effective. All of the available COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine requires one dose. The Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines both require two doses. If you take the Pfizer vaccine, your second dose should be received approximately 21 days after the first dose. If you receive the Moderna vaccine, your second dose should be received approximately 28 days after the first dose. Your second dose must be the same brand as the first dose.

Anyone 12 years of age and older is currently eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is the only vaccine currently available for those younger than 18.

How do I know the vaccine is safe?

Safety has been a top priority during COVID-19 vaccine research, development, and authorization. Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been shown to be safe; no adverse events have been associated with these vaccines, other than a rare allergic reaction following vaccination. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable therapies, you should ask your doctor if you should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

There is an increased risk of a rare adverse event called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) following receipt of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine. Nearly all reports of this condition, which involves blood clots with low platelets, have been in adult women younger than 50 years old. After a thorough review of the available data, the CDC and FDA have determined at this time that the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks.

The vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. The vaccines don't affect or interact with your DNA in any way. The vaccine does not stay in your body. Millions of Americans have been vaccinated safely. COVID-19 vaccines are continuously monitored for safety.

Are there side effects?

Side effects are more common after the second dose of the vaccine. These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection. You may experience:

- Pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given
- Mild fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches

The vaccine was developed so quickly. Were there safety shortcuts?

While the development of COVID-19 vaccines has been called "Operation Warp Speed," the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has a rigorous process to assure any vaccine meets a standard of safety and efficacy before being released. While the vaccines were developed quickly, they weren't created from scratch. Researchers have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) for other diseases for decades, and scientists began creating viral vectors (Johnson & Johnson) in the 1970s. The main thing shortened was the production process (warp speed).

How much will the COVID-19 vaccine cost?

COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost. It is possible that health care providers may charge a fee to administer the vaccine. Health insurance will cover these fees. Those who are uninsured and unable to pay the administration fee cannot be turned away.

What if I already had COVID-19?

A COVID-19 vaccine is still recommended because vaccinating boosts your immunity and may help prevent reinfection and lower your risk of getting sick again. Vaccination may also provide greater protection against variants. Additionally, a growing body of [evidence](#) suggests that COVID-19 vaccines also reduce asymptomatic infection and transmission. If you have had COVID-19 and would like to be vaccinated, it is important to wait until you are no longer showing signs of COVID infection before getting vaccinated.