



FAQs About the Vaccines for Older Adults

As an older adult, you are at greater risk of being hospitalized or dying if you get COVID-19. These frequently asked questions will help you understand more about the available vaccines and build your vaccine confidence. They will also help you learn the steps to get vaccinated so that you can feel safe and confident.

1. When should older adults get a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Because older adults are at higher risk of severe COVID-19, the CDC recommends that adults age 65 and older get vaccinated as soon as possible.

2. How do I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Covid-19 vaccines are now available nationwide to people age 65 and older.
- Contact your state or local health department, medical provider, or pharmacy to find out where you can get a vaccine in your area and to schedule an appointment.
- You can search for nearby vaccine providers and get your local health department's contact information on the CDC website.

3. What can I expect at my COVID-19 vaccination appointment?

- When getting your vaccine, wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet apart from others.
- You should receive a paper or electronic version of a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you are being offered.
 - The fact sheet contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of receiving that specific vaccine.
- You should receive a vaccination record card or printout that tells you which COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, the vaccine lot number, and where you received it.
 - You should bring the card with you for your second vaccine shot, if two shots are needed.
 - Keep the record card in a safe place in case you need it later to show you have been vaccinated.
- You should be monitored onsite for at least 15 minutes after being vaccinated for a rare but serious allergic reaction.

4. If the vaccine I got requires a second shot, how do I schedule the second shot?

- Ideally, you should have a second shot appointment scheduled before you leave the place where you got your first shot.
- If you don't have an appointment for a second shot or you are not sure, contact the location that set up your first appointment for help. This may be your state or local health department, hospital, pharmacy, or other vaccine provider.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two shots to get the most protection. The timing between your first and second shot depends on which vaccine you received:
 - You should get your second Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine shot no earlier than 21 days after your first shot.
 - You should get your second Moderna vaccine shot no earlier than 28 days after your first shot.
- You should **get your second shot as close to the recommended time interval as possible**.

5. Does it cost anything to get the vaccine?

- There is no cost to you to get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you have Medicare, bring your Medicare card to your vaccine appointment so the vaccine provider can bill Medicare.

6. How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

- Vaccines teach your cells how to make a harmless protein that your immune system knows doesn't belong in your body. Your immune system responds by producing antibodies, which protect you against infection should the real virus enter your body.
- COVID-19 vaccines can't give you COVID-19 because they don't contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.
- COVID-19 vaccines don't affect your DNA. You can find more information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they work on [CDC website](#).

7. Are there side effects with taking the COVID-19 vaccines?

- Side effects from the vaccines are common, particularly after the second shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.
- Side effects may include fever, feeling tired, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, and pain or swelling on the arm where you got the shot.
- These side effects are usually mild and should last at most a few days.

8. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

- Yes. Millions of people in the United States have already received authorized COVID-19 vaccines that met FDA’s rigorous, scientific standards for safety and effectiveness.
- The FDA and CDC continue to monitor vaccine safety now that the vaccines are in use.
- COVID-19 vaccines can’t give you COVID-19.

9. Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have a medical condition or take medications for other medical conditions?

- People with underlying medical conditions can receive the FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines as long as they haven’t had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of the ingredients in the vaccines.
- Vaccination is an important consideration for people with certain underlying medical conditions because they are at increased risk for severe COVID-19.

10. What if I have more questions?

- If you have more questions around getting a COVID-19 vaccine, visit the [CDC website](#).