

Should I take the vaccine?

Yes! Given the ongoing pandemic, the only way we will get out of this is for at least 70% of the population to achieve herd immunity by vaccination, not by contracting COVID19.

What type of symptoms should I expect after vaccination?

Expect injection site pain and swelling. Other common complaints have been headaches, fever, chills and tiredness. Symptoms resolve in a few days. Make sure to get lots of rest, eat well and drink fluids to stay hydrated. You may also use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help with any symptoms.

What about the cases of anaphylaxis reported after people received the vaccine?

There have been a few confirmed cases of anaphylactic reactions after the COVID-19 vaccine. Anaphylaxis is a severe and life-threatening allergy. It is rare but may occur after vaccination. Between December 14-23, 2020, there were 21 cases of anaphylaxis for 1,893,360 COVID-19 vaccines administered. This is about 11 cases per million. Most patients (86%) had symptom onset within 30 minutes of vaccination while 81% had a history of allergies or allergic reactions.

People passing out on TV (vasovagal reaction) are not allergic to the vaccine. This commonly occurs (in susceptible people) after needle sticks, with dehydration or even extreme excitement or stress.

So, if I have a history of anaphylaxis with a different medication, can I get the vaccine?

Ask your doctor if based on your history, you should get the vaccine. If you have the following history, you should not get the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or any of its components
- Immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or any of its components (including polyethylene glycol [PEG])*
- Immediate allergic reaction of any severity to polysorbate (due to potential cross-reactive hypersensitivity with the vaccine ingredient PEG)*

*If you have a history of immediate allergic reaction to polyethylene glycol or polysorbate, you SHOULD NOT get the vaccine except cleared by an allergist and it is determined that you can receive the vaccine.

I had COVID-19 last month. Should I get the vaccine now?

Data shows that reinfection risk with COVID-19 within 90 days of an initial disease is low. For this reason, you should postpone your first shot until 90 days after infection, **especially while vaccine supply is still limited**. The CDC recommends that vaccination of persons with known current SARS-CoV-2 infection should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) **and** criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation.

What if I get COVID19 or am exposed to COVID19 between my injections? Please note that this is a question that I promised to look up***

You should quarantine for up to 14 days but are still able to get the second dose of vaccine once this period is complete. Call your vaccination site and postpone your second shot. You must do this to protect others in the community. There is no data available on if the entire vaccine course needs to be repeated in such an instance. If there is limited vaccine supply around the same time, please consider delaying your second injection. Unfortunately, there is no guidance on how long the time frame should be.

My second vaccination appointment was canceled. What do I do?

Most centers that are canceling vaccinations are offering later appointments. If you do not hear back within a few days, call to follow up. You may wait up to **42 days** between your first and second vaccinations. Most canceled appointments are rescheduled within this time frame.

I completed the vaccine series. Do I still need to wear a mask, perform social distancing and frequent handwashing?

Yes! No vaccine is 100% effective. Also, with high transmission rates in the community, no one knows if you can transmit COVID19 after vaccination. Please do this for all of us!

What about my pregnant family members and children in my family?

Enrollment for clinical trials for these populations are ongoing. There is also follow-up for women who conceived during the trials of the vaccines last year. For now, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises that any woman who is pregnant or planning to become pregnant may elect to get the vaccine. Children under 16 are currently not eligible for vaccines.

Stay Safe!

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References:

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