TEAMSTERS SAFETY & HEALTH
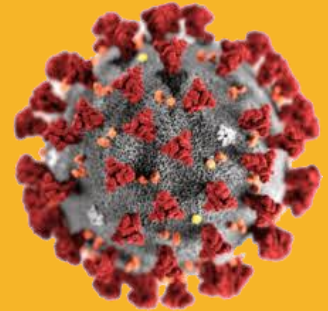## Coronavirus

COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunization
Coronavirus
(COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2)

(updated) August 12, 2021

WHAT IS VACCINATION?

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent disease and save lives by administering a vaccine that helps support the body's natural immune system. Vaccines save the lives of up to 3 million people every year.[1] When a person gets vaccinated against a disease, their risk of infection is reduced, so they are far less likely to transmit it to others. As more people in a community get vaccinated, fewer people remain vulnerable, and there is less possibility for passing the pathogen on from person to person.
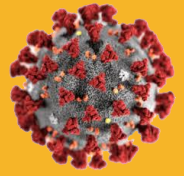
A vaccine reduces the risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defenses to build protection. Once you get a vaccine, your immune system will respond by:

- Recognizing the invading germ (virus or bacteria)
- Producing **Antibodies***

   *Antibodies are proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight disease.

- Remembering the disease markers and how to fight them.
   - If you are exposed to the germ, your immune system can quickly recognize and destroy it before you become sick.

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[1] Why is vaccination important?: https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination

WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

The most effective way to prevent an illness is vaccination. Safe and effective vaccines have been used for more than 60 years.[2] Acquired immunity from a vaccine may have a limit; therefore, each person should be aware of the time limit for the vaccine received.

Vaccinations have been used for years and have proven effective in protection against several pathogens and seasonal viruses such as influenza.[3] Without vaccines, we are at risk of severe illness and disability from the disease. In emergencies such as during an active pandemic, vaccinations such as the COVID-19 vaccination have been approved for emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in advance of an anticipated full FDA authorization.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates vaccines save between 2 and 3 million lives every year.[4]

Two Key Reasons:
- To reduce your chance of contracting the COVID-19 virus.
- To protect others in the workplace and community.

WHAT INGREDIENTS ARE INSIDE THE VACCINE?

The ingredients of a vaccine play an essential role in ensuring that it is safe and effective.

- The key ingredients in both the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines are genetic material (mRNA) wrapped in lipids (oils) and carried in a saline solution.[5] Both vaccines use strands of laboratory-made mRNA to trigger an immune response in your body. After you get vaccinated, your immune system will quickly make antibodies or specialized proteins that can fight off the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Many components used in vaccines occur naturally in the body, our environment, and in the foods we eat.

- The Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine is manufactured using a specific type of virus called adenovirus type 26 (Ad26).[6] Ad26 is used to deliver a piece of genetic material used to make the distinctive "spike" protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This specific adenovirus has been modified for the vaccine to prevent replication in the human body to cause illness. This vaccine is the result of decades of research on adenovirus-based vaccines and is proven safe to use in this application.
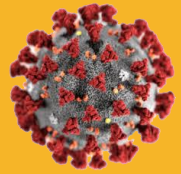
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[2] https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)
[3] CDC: Flu Season
[4] WHO estimates for vaccines that save lives
[5] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf
[6] https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-issues-emergency-use-authorization-third-covid-19-vaccine

- Unlike COVID-19 vaccines, Flu vaccines contain tiny amounts of inactive flu viruses, which trigger the body's natural immune system to create antibodies to fight the viruses. Our bodies remember the virus so they can quickly recognize future exposure and launch an immediate response. Flu vaccines also contain small amounts of formaldehyde, aluminum salts, thimerosal (preservative to extend shelf life), chicken egg proteins, gelatin, and antibiotics.[7]

- COVID-19 and Influenza are predominantly considered respiratory illnesses that can affect other organs and lead to severe health conditions. Vaccines can help save lives and prevent future illnesses. Neither the Moderna, Pfizer, nor Janssen vaccines contain dead or weakened COVID-19 virus material.

WHERE IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED INTO THE BODY?

The vaccine is administered in the upper arm's deltoid (shoulder) muscle[8].

HOW WILL COVID-19 VACCINATIONS BE ADMINISTERED TO THE PUBLIC?

States have partnered with hospitals and healthcare systems, physical offices, pharmacies, mobile vaccination providers, occupational health settings for large employers, community health centers, and local health departments to administer COVID-19 vaccines to ensure equal access to essential workers.[9]

HOW MANY DOSES OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE WILL BE NEEDED?

The Janssen COVID-19 vaccination schedule requires only a single dose to be effective.[10] The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two shots to be effective.[11] The same vaccine made by the same manufacturer must be administered for both first and second doses if you receive the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.[12] COVID-19 vaccine products are not thought to be interchangeable at this time. It typically takes two weeks after vaccination for the body to build full protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. It should be noted that a fully vaccinated person may get infected with the virus, but the vaccines offer a high level of protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

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[7] Flu shot ingredients: What they contain and why (medicalnewstoday.com)
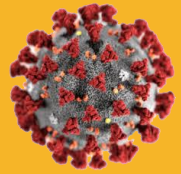[8] https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/guide.pdf
[9] https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/downloads/COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf
[10] https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download
[11] Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC
[12] Interim COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Guide (state.mn.us)

WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN VACCINATED?

The vaccination provider should provide you with a vaccination card or printout detailing:

- The specific COVID-19 vaccine you received,
- The date you received it,
- The location where you received it.

The vaccination provider should also provide a paper or electronic fact sheet on the specific COVID-19 vaccine that you were given to help you understand the risks and benefits of that vaccine, as well as the dosing schedule should you require a second shot based on the brand and type of vaccine received.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED THE COVID-19 VACCINATION?

- Continue to wear a face mask or cloth face covering over your nose and mouth in public.
- Practice physical distancing. Stay at least 6 feet (2 arm's length) from others that do not live in your household.
- Avoid crowds in public settings such as restaurants, gas stations, truck stops, department stores, bars, fitness centers, or movie theaters.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol):
- Continue to clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces daily (tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, toilets, faucets, sinks, workstations.
    - Clean the surface first if it's visibly dirty. Use detergent or soapy water before disinfection.
    - Use an approved disinfectant for treating surfaces. Search the EPA's list N: Disinfectants for COVID-19 for approved disinfectants.[13]

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF TAKING THE COVID-19 VACCINE?
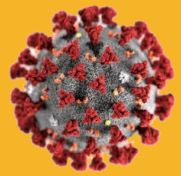
The generally mild side effects that have been reported with the COVID-19 vaccine include:[14]

- Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, nausea, feeling unwell, swollen lymph nodes, injection site redness, and swelling.

While rare, the COVID-19 vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction that would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a vaccine dose. The CDC's guidelines to vaccine providers require that patients be monitored for 15-30 min for signs of an allergic reaction.

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[13]https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-12/documents/list_n_how-to_infographic_final_0.pdf
[14] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf

Vaccination providers should have appropriate medications and equipment—such as epinephrine, antihistamines, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, and timing devices to check your pulse—at all COVID-19 vaccination sites.

Signs of severe allergic reactions may include:[15]
- Difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, fast heartbeats, a rash all over your body, dizziness, and weakness

If you experience or think you may be experiencing a severe allergic reaction after leaving the immediate vaccination center, proceed immediately to an emergency room or dial 911.

HOW DO YOU REPORT THE ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE?

V-Safe is a new smartphone-based tool developed by the CDC that uses text messages and surveys to check in with vaccinated individuals for adverse events after a COVID-19 vaccination. This tool can also be used to provide second-dose reminders (if needed) and live telephone follow-up from the CDC if you report an adverse event. Adverse events would include reporting that you missed work, were unable to complete normal daily activities, or had to seek care from a health provider.

All healthcare facilities and professionals that will provide COVID-19 vaccines will be asked to provide hard copies of the V-Safe information sheet and encourage individuals on the importance of enrolling. Vaccination Program Providers also have a responsibility to report errors during vaccination, severe adverse events, and any cases involving hospitalization or death.

WILL COVID-19 VACCINES BE CONSIDERED MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY FOR EMPLOYMENT?
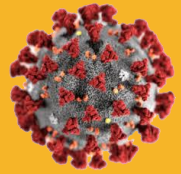
Employers may seek to mandate vaccinations for their employees legally, but it may also be subject to bargaining with the designated employee representative (union). Vaccine recipients must be informed about the benefits and risks of any approved vaccine, and they have the option to accept or refuse immunization, as stated by the FDA.[16] The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)[17] says that employers are allowed to establish "a requirement that an individual shall not pose a direct threat to individuals' health or safety in the workplace," which may include mandating vaccines. There are exceptions for employees with disabilities or "sincerely held" religious beliefs and categories of workers protected by the ADA[18] and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In those instances, employers must attempt to provide covered employees with a "reasonable accommodation."

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[15] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf
[16] https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained?
[17] https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/may-employers-mandate-covid-19-vaccines-79371/
[18] ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VACCINATION. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you have a question about vaccines, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider. They can provide you with science-based advice about vaccination for you and your family, including the recommended vaccination schedule.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES?

- ❖ State Vaccination Plans – COVID-19 Resources for State Leaders (csg.org)
- ❖ COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf
- ❖ Essential Workers COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit | CDC
- ❖ Fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf (cvdvaccine-us.com)
- ❖ How to Protect Yourself & Others from COVID-19 / CDC
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC
- ❖ Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines (cdc.gov)
- ❖ Traditional and accelerated vaccine-development pipelines.
- ❖ COVID-19 Vaccines / U.S. Food & Drug Administration