

# This is Our Shot to protect ourselves, our families and our coworkers

## What are the COVID-19 vaccines?

- The three vaccines that are authorized and recommended by the CDC to prevent COVID-19 are made by Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.
- Pfizer and Moderna require two shots. After the first dose, you need a second one to get the most protection.
- Pfizer is 21 days after.
- Moderna is 28 days after.
- Johnson & Johnson requires one shot.



## What is the concern about the Delta and Omicron variants?

- Viruses, like COVID-19, constantly change through mutation producing new variants of the virus. The COVID-19 Delta and Omicron variants have one or more mutations that makes them easier to catch.
- The Omicron variant is a new variant detected in November 2021.<sup>5</sup> It is now the most common variant in the United States.<sup>6</sup> There is growing evidence that Omicron is easier to catch than Delta.<sup>7</sup>
- Until more is known about the risk of Omicron, it is important to get the vaccine and boosters to protect yourself and others.<sup>8</sup>
- Fully vaccinated people are much less likely to get hospitalized or die from COVID-19 than unvaccinated people. The highest number of cases and serious illness is happening in places with low vaccination rates.

## Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective against variants?<sup>9,10</sup>

- Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are very effective, but no vaccine is perfect.
- Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths due to infection with the Omicron and Delta variants.
- When fully vaccinated people get infected with COVID-19 (breakthrough infection), they have a very reduced risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.
- When fully vaccinated people gets symptoms from COVID-19, the symptoms are less severe than in unvaccinated people, which means they are much less likely to be hospitalized or die than people who are not vaccinated.

## Are the vaccines free?

- Yes, all three vaccines are free in the United States.

<sup>5</sup> CDC. Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know. Updated December 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

<sup>6</sup> CDC. COVID Data Tracker. Variant Proportions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> WHO. Enhancing response to Omicron SARS-CoV-2 variant. Updated January 7, 2022. [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/enhancing-readiness-for-omicron-\(b.1.1.529\)-technical-brief-and-priority-actions-for-member-states](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/enhancing-readiness-for-omicron-(b.1.1.529)-technical-brief-and-priority-actions-for-member-states)

<sup>8</sup> CDC. Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know. Updated December 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

<sup>9</sup> CDC. Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know. Updated December 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

<sup>10</sup> CDC. The Possibility of COVID-19 after Vaccination: Breakthrough Infections. Updated December 17, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/why-measure-effectiveness/breakthrough-cases.html>

## Can kids get the vaccine?

- Yes, kids 5 years of age and older can get the Pfizer vaccine.<sup>11</sup>

## Why do we need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- All three vaccines reduce your risk of getting COVID-19. And if you do get COVID-19, all three vaccines greatly reduce your risk of getting seriously sick or dying from COVID-19.
- All three vaccines build protection by training your body's immune system to protect you from the virus.
- We can save lives and help stop the pandemic if we do this together. When more of us get the vaccine, we will all be more protected.

## Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

- All three COVID-19 vaccines were tested and found to be safe and effective.
- Millions of people in the United States have already received COVID-19 vaccines.
- CDC recommends you get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.
- Allergic reactions after the COVID-19 vaccine are rare and are treatable.
- Blood clots with low platelets after the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are very rare.
- Myocarditis and pericarditis after the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine are rare and treatable.

## What are the side effects?

Side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and go away in one or two days for most people.

**On your arm where you got the shot, you may feel:**

- Pain
- Swelling

**Throughout the rest of your body, you may feel:**

- Fever • Tiredness
- Chills • Headache

## Who can get a booster shot?<sup>12</sup>

### Johnson & Johnson:

- You can get a booster shot if you had your Johnson & Johnson shot at least 2 months ago.

### Pfizer or Moderna:

- For age 12 to 17, you can get a booster shot if you had your second Pfizer shot at least 5 months ago.
- For age 18 and older, you can get a booster shot if you had your second Pfizer or Moderna shot at least 6 months ago.

## Can I choose which vaccine I get for my booster shot?<sup>13</sup>

- Pfizer or Moderna booster shots are preferred. You may get the Johnson & Johnson's booster shot in some situations, such as a previous allergic reaction to Pfizer or Moderna or if the Johnson & Johnson booster is the only one available.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> CDC. Stay Up to Date with Your Vaccines. Updated January 5, 2022. [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvaccines%2Ffully-vaccinated-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvaccines%2Ffully-vaccinated-guidance.html)

<sup>12</sup> CDC. Stay Up to Date with Your Vaccines. Updated January 5, 2022. [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvaccines%2Ffully-vaccinated-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvaccines%2Ffully-vaccinated-guidance.html)

<sup>13</sup> CDC. Choosing Your COVID-19 Booster Shot. Updated January 7, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/janssen.html>

<sup>14</sup> CDC. Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety. Updated December 28, 2021.

## Am I still fully vaccinated if I don't get a booster shot?

- Yes, everyone is still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second vaccine dose of Pfizer or Moderna and two weeks after the Johnson & Johnson one dose vaccine.

## Pfizer and Moderna Myocarditis and Pericarditis Risk<sup>6,7</sup>

- A rare risk of Inflammation of the heart—called myocarditis and pericarditis—has been observed. Confirmed cases have mainly been among young men between 16 to 30 years old and have occurred within a week after receiving the Pfizer or Moderna shot (more often after the second dose).
- Most patients with myocarditis and pericarditis recovered well after treatment and rest.
- If you or your child has already gotten the first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, it's important to get the second dose unless your doctor tells you not to get it.

Be on the lookout for any of the following symptoms:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

Seek medical care if you think you or your child have any of these symptoms within a week after COVID-19 vaccination.

## Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Update

- On April 23, 2021, after a thorough safety review, the CDC and FDA lifted the temporary pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- The CDC recommends that women younger than 50 years old should be aware of the rare risk of blood clots with low platelets after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and that there are other COVID-19 vaccine options available, such as Pfizer and Moderna. For women 50 years and older and men of all ages, the risk of getting blood clots with low platelets is even more rare.
- For three weeks after getting the vaccine, according to the CDC your risk of developing blood clots with low platelets is very low, but you should be on the lookout for the following possible symptoms:
  - Severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision
  - Shortness of breath
  - Chest pain
  - Leg swelling
  - Persistent abdominal pain
  - Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the injection site.



**After getting the vaccine, don't stop protecting yourself, your coworkers and your family. Keep wearing a mask when around others at work and outside of work, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, avoid poorly ventilated spaces, and wash hands often.**

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine: [unitehere.org/vaccine](https://unitehere.org/vaccine)

1. CDC. SARS-CoV-2 Variant Classifications and Definitions. Updated Dec. 1, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant-info.html>
2. CDC. Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People. Updated Nov. 19, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
3. CDC. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Monitoring Incidence of COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths, by Vaccination Status — 13 U.S. Jurisdictions, April 4–July 17, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7037e1.htm>
4. CDC. Your COVID-19 Vaccination. Update Nov. 3, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/your-vaccination.html>
5. CDC. Myocarditis and Pericarditis. Updated Nov. 12, 2021. What You Need to Know. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/myocarditis.html>
6. FDA. Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers. What are the Risks of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine? <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>