

All you need to know to get

VACCINE READY





WHAT IS A COVID-19 VACCINE?

A COVID-19 vaccine is medicine, given to you through an injection, that trains the immune system to allow the body to better fight the COVID-19 virus. Some COVID-19 vaccines may need to be administered in two split doses so the body has time to produce antibodies and develop stronger immunity to fight the virus.



IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE EFFECTIVE?

COVID-19 vaccines are effective in protecting against infections and most specifically against severe COVID-19 disease and death. For those people who have already been vaccinated, the vaccines have shown over 80% protection against severe disease.



ARE VACCINES SAFE?

Vaccines go through extensive trials to make sure they are safe and effective.

- They go through a rigorous, multi-phase testing process including large, phase 3 clinical trials that involve tens of thousands of people.
- Once a clinical trial has shown that a vaccine is safe and effective, a series of independent reviews of the **efficacy** and safety evidence is required. **Efficacy** refers to the extent to which the vaccines are beneficial for people to take.
- All this needs to happen before the World Health Organization (WHO) considers a vaccine for what is called 'pre-qualification'.
- If a vaccine has undergone thorough evaluation of relevant data, testing of samples and WHO inspection of relevant manufacturing sites — and the outcome is positive — it is included in the WHO List of Prequalified Vaccines.





HOW IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE GIVEN?

The vaccine is an injection, usually in the arm. If you have already had a vaccination in the arm this season (for example, the flu vaccine), it's best to get the COVID-19 injection on the other arm. You will need to roll up your sleeve for your vaccine to be administered, so wear clothing that will allow for this.



HOW MANY INJECTIONS WILL I NEED AND WHEN SHOULD I GET MY SECOND DOSE, IF NEEDED?

You will need one or two initial vaccinations, depending on the vaccine you receive. For some vaccines, like Pfizer-BioNTech, you will need two doses (two injections). For others, like Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) vaccine, you need only one dose. If you are vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine the recommended interval between your first dose and second dose is 42 days.



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR THE VACCINE TO WORK?

It takes time for your body to build protection after the vaccination. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 28 days after the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

WILL I EXPERIENCE ANY SIDE EFFECTS AFTER GETTING MY VACCINATION?

The following side effects are common:

- Injection area may become sore, red or swollen
- Fever or chills
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Nausea

Side effects can start around six hours after the vaccine, peak at 24 hours and resolve in two or three days. These side effects show your body is mounting an immune response. If you need to, treat pain and fever with paracetamol.

Very rare side effects are anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction), blood clots (symptoms include leg pain or swelling, chest pain or shortness of breath) or COVID arm (mild allergic reaction that presents as an itchy, red rash that is typically around where the needle entered your arm). If you experience any of these symptoms, paracetamol and antihistamines can relieve these symptoms. If you are still unwell you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.



WHEN SHOULD I DELAY MY VACCINATION?

You are only considered fully recovered from COVID-19. Please delay your vaccination until:

- 10 days after your positive COVID-19 test, if you have no symptoms, or
- 10 days after any COVID-19 symptoms start, or
- 10 days after you're clinically stable (no longer on oxygen), if you had serious illness or went to hospital.

Once these 10 days are over and you are fully recovered, you then need to wait at least another 30 days before you get vaccinated.



WILL I STILL NEED TO WEAR A MASK AND PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING IF I'VE BEEN VACCINATED?

Yes. Even after you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should still follow all the preventive safety measures. Keep wearing a mask, stay at least 1.5 metres apart from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and wash or sanitise your hands often.



WHY IS COVID-19 VACCINATION IMPORTANT AND WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE IT?

The COVID-19 vaccination:

- 1 | Uses safe and effective vaccines to help protect you and your family.
- 2 | Prevents severe illness and death.
- 3 | Will let you start doing more.
- 4 | Will be important in helping stop the pandemic.
- 5 | Is a safer way to help build protection.



WILL I NEED COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOTS?

A vaccine booster shot is a vaccination that may be needed to 'top up' your immunity against a virus or disease to get your immune response back to the optimal protective levels. The requirement for a booster will be guided by clinical studies on vaccine effectiveness and its duration.





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