

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety: What to Know



The vaccines are safe

The COVID-19 vaccines we have in the United States have been through the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history¹. All the vaccines are either fully approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—meaning the FDA found no serious safety concerns. Independent experts also reviewed the studies and found no concerns.

The vaccines continue to be monitored for safety and effectiveness as they are used by the public. The United States has several systems in place to look for safety issues and catch them quickly when they happen.



The vaccines work

You may have seen information that makes it seem like some vaccines are better than others. Clinical trials showed that all available vaccines were highly effective at preventing COVID-19. The differences between vaccines are hard to compare because they were tested at different times and places. Some were even tested against different strains of COVID-19.

Once you are fully vaccinated, it is still possible to get COVID-19, but you are unlikely to get really sick or need to go to the hospital. Studies showed that each of the vaccines had at least 85 percent efficacy in preventing **severe** COVID-19 illness. The vaccines also prevented many people from getting **any** COVID-19 symptoms:

- Johnson & Johnson (Janssen), 74 percent
- Pfizer-BioNTech, 95 percent
- Moderna, 94 percent

Side effects are normal

You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. However, like other vaccines, you may feel some side effects. These are signs the vaccine is working. For two-dose vaccines, side effects after the second shot may be worse. If possible, give yourself time to rest and recover in the day or two after getting the shot. For COVID-19 vaccines that need two doses, make sure you get your second dose. You won't be fully protected until two weeks after your second dose.

On your arm where you got the shot:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling



Throughout your body:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines". March 25, 2021, available online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>.



Signs of an allergic reaction

Allergic reactions to the vaccine are very rare, but they can happen. The clinic will watch you for at least 15 minutes after your vaccine in case you have an allergic reaction. They are trained to respond and know how to help you.

If you have an allergic reaction after leaving the clinic, call 911. Signs of an allergic reaction include: trouble breathing, swelling of your face and throat, fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over your body, dizziness, and weakness.

Help us watch out for any safety concerns

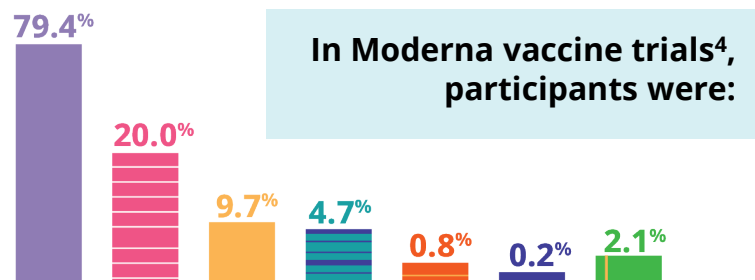
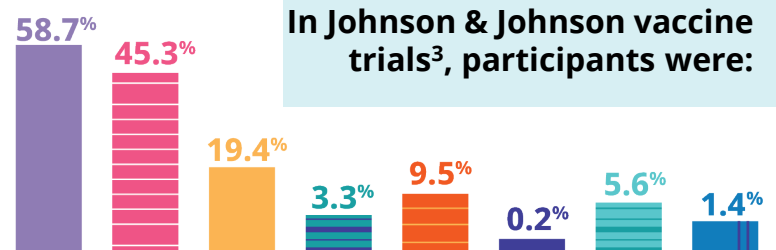
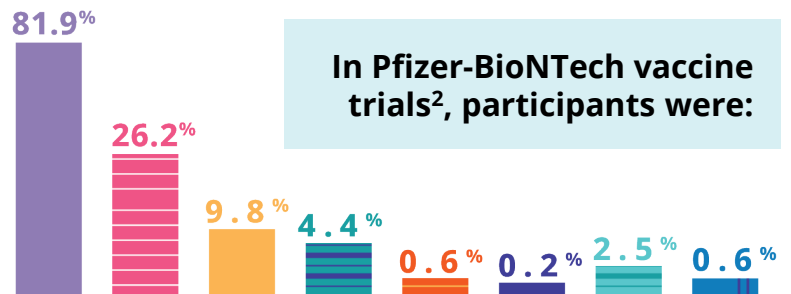
Sign up for V-safe to report any side effects: vsafe.cdc.gov. Your participation helps us keep the vaccines safe for everyone.

You or your vaccine provider can report serious side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). The FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) use VAERS to watch for trends or possible problems.

You can submit a report at vaers.hhs.gov. Learn more about how VAERS and other safety monitoring systems work at www.doh.wa.gov/immunization/vaccinesafety.

People of many races and ethnicities participated in the trials

Scientists tested each vaccine on tens of thousands of people.



²Food and Drug Administration. "FDA Briefing Document: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine", Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting. December 10, 2020, available online at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144245/download>.

³Food and Drug Administration. "FDA Briefing Document: Janssen Ad26.COV2.S Vaccine for the Prevention of COVID-19", Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting. February 26, 2021, available online at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/146217/download>.

⁴Food and Drug Administration. "FDA Briefing Document: Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine", Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting. December 17, 2020, available online at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144434/download>.



The vaccine is safe and effective for children, people who are pregnant, and those with underlying conditions. As more people get vaccinated, we will keep getting more data on safety and side effects. Data show the COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and serious side effects are rare.

Talk to a health care provider or clinic worker if you have concerns about getting vaccinated



Allergies

- The CDC recommends the vaccine for anyone who is not allergic to any ingredient in the vaccine.
- Allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccines are often thought to be caused by fats in the vaccine, called polyethylene glycol (PEG) and polysorbate.
- The vaccines do not have common allergens like those found in food, so most other allergies should not be a concern when getting the COVID-19 vaccine. For example, the vaccines are egg-free, latex-free, and preservative-free.

Ethics

The COVID-19 vaccine ingredients are safe and needed for the vaccines to do their job. One piece of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is made inside of lab-grown copies of cells that originally came from elective abortions that took place over 35 years ago. Many other vaccines, including chickenpox, rubella, and hepatitis A, are made the same way. None of the vaccines contain human cells (including fetal cells), the COVID-19 virus, latex, preservatives, or any animal by-products including pork products or gelatin. The vaccines are not grown in eggs and contain no egg products.

Medical conditions

- Studies showed the COVID-19 vaccines were just as safe and effective in people with medical conditions. Twenty to 45 percent of participants in each of the vaccine trials had conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, and HIV.
- We have limited safety data on vaccine use in people with weakened immune systems or autoimmune conditions. The CDC still recommends the vaccine for these groups because they have a higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.
- Medical experts in pregnancy and birth recommend the COVID-19 vaccine for people who are pregnant, lactating, or planning to get pregnant. Data show the COVID-19 vaccines are safe during pregnancy. In fact, some studies show that a vaccinated parent can even pass antibodies against COVID-19 along to their baby through pregnancy and lactation. Pregnant people are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including death. The vaccines are the best protection.