

Learn more about the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine



The Washington State Department of Health heard your questions and concerns about getting vaccinated while being incarcerated or detained. Getting vaccinated is a personal choice—here's some information to help you make your decision.

How has COVID-19 impacted people who are incarcerated?

COVID-19 is more likely to spread in places where people live close together. Across the country, people in state and federal prisons have higher rates of COVID-19 than the overall rates for each state. According to the COVID Prison Project, 33 percent of people in Washington state and federal prisons have tested positive for COVID-19, compared to 4 percent of all Washingtonians (as of February 22, 2021). However, these data are likely incomplete.¹

How many shots do I need?

For the Pfizer vaccine, you will receive 2 shots, 3 weeks apart. The vaccine is fully effective two weeks after the second shot.

Pfizer is a mRNA vaccine.

mRNA vaccines teach our body's cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. That immune response and making antibodies is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine and mRNA vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA.

Pfizer is available for anyone 12 years or older.

¹ Madeline Guth, "Key Issues to Watch for Justice-Involved Populations: COVID-19, Vaccines, and Medicaid," Kaiser Family Foundation (February 24, 2021).

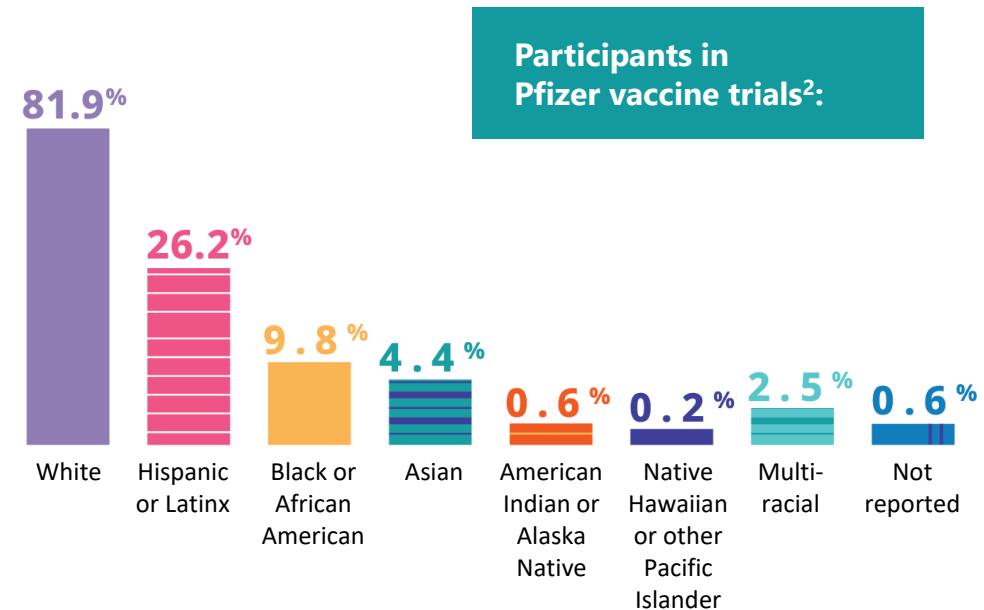
² Food and Drug Administration. "FDA Briefing Document: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine", Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting. December 10, 2020.

Are the vaccines safe?

Each vaccine was tested on tens of thousands of people of different races and ethnicities (see below) and no serious safety concerns were reported. Studies showed the COVID-19 vaccines were just as safe and effective in people with medical conditions (46.2% of global Pfizer trial participants had an underlying health condition; 34.8% of participants were obese).



So far, tens of millions of people across the country have gotten vaccinated. The federal government and the Department of Health check safety reports regularly to make sure there are no safety concerns.





What do COVID-19 vaccines do?

COVID-19 vaccines train our bodies to build defenses to the disease that keep us from getting sick.

What was the efficacy of Pfizer in the clinical trials?

- **95%** protection against any illness
- **100%** protection against death

What to know about vaccine efficacy

Efficacy is a measurement of how well a vaccine prevents disease in a clinical trial. The clinical trials happened at different times in different places, so the efficacy numbers can't really be compared. They just show what happened in each individual trial. **Effectiveness** is the measurement of how well a vaccine prevents disease in real world. We are still waiting to learn the effectiveness of the vaccines.

What are the side effects?

Side effects are normal. With the Pfizer vaccine, people have experienced chills, headache, pain, tiredness, and/or redness and swelling at the injection site that go away in a day or two. These symptoms are a sign that the vaccine is working. Side effects are more common after the second dose than the first dose.

The side effects of the vaccines are not as bad as getting COVID-19, which can lead to illness, hospitalization, and death.

I've had COVID-19. Can I get the vaccine?

Yes, experts recommend anyone who has had COVID-19 get the vaccine. Data show it is uncommon to be re-infected with COVID-19 in the 90 days after you were infected, so you might have some protection from COVID-19 (called natural immunity). However, we don't know how long after that natural immunity might last.

What are the ingredients of the vaccines?

Like other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines contain fat, salts, and sugars to help them work better in the body. The ingredients are all safe and needed for the vaccine to do its job. It does not contain human cells (including fetal cells), the virus that causes COVID-19, any animal by-products including pork products, latex, metals, tracking devices, or preservatives. It was not grown in eggs and contains no egg products.

How can I get a COVID-19 vaccination?

All people who are incarcerated in Washington prisons, jails, and detention centers will soon be or have already been offered the vaccine. Tens of millions of people around the country have been vaccinated with no safety issues. It is the goal of the Washington State Department of Health to ensure all people incarcerated in Washington state are offered the COVID-19 vaccine and receive the information they need about its safety and efficacy so people can make the best decision to protect themselves.