



## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

*This information is based on currently available evidence, resources, information, emergency use authorization and expert opinion and is subject to change. As additional evidence regarding the use of COVID-19 vaccine for individuals emerges, it will be necessary to modify this document.*

### **When will COVID vaccine be available in Georgia?**

The first doses of Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccine arrived in Georgia in mid-December 2020. In March 2021, Georgia received its first allocation of Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine.

Georgia is allocated doses of each vaccine weekly, depending on supply, and these doses are distributed to providers throughout the state.

### **Who should be vaccinated against COVID-19 infection?**

The goal is for everyone to easily get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as large quantities of vaccine are available. Once vaccine is widely available, COVID vaccine will be available through doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, federally qualified health centers and county health departments.

### **Who is eligible for COVID vaccination in Georgia?**

Currently the following groups are eligible for COVID vaccine in Georgia:

- Healthcare workers (physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, EMS personnel, environmental services, etc.)
- Residents and staff of long-term care facilities
- Adults aged 65+ and their caregivers
- Law enforcement, firefighters, first responders
- Educators and staff (Pre-K, K-12, DECAL licensed or exempt childcare programs)
- Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers
- Parents of children with complex medical conditions

The goal is for everyone to easily to get a COVID vaccination as soon as vaccine supply is available. As the vaccine supply increases, more groups will be added to receive vaccination.

### **Where can I get a COVID vaccine when I am eligible?**

Vaccines are available at health departments throughout the state, hospitals, private physicians, retail pharmacies such as Walmart, CVS, Walgreens, Kroger, Publix and independent pharmacies, and at mass vaccination sites in Georgia.

### **What COVID vaccines are available now?**

On December 11, 2020, Pfizer was given Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna vaccine was given EUA December 18, 2020 and Johnson & Johnson vaccine was given EUA February 27, 2021.

There are large clinical trials currently in progress or being planned for other COVID-19 vaccines in the United States.

### **What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Commonly known side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are short-term injection site pain, fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches and joint pain. These symptoms are temporary and are in line with side effects some people experience from some other vaccines, including the flu shot and the vaccine to prevent shingles.

Vaccines work to fight disease by producing an immune response within the body, and sometimes that means flu-like symptoms occur as your body responds to the vaccine. It is normal and expected.

### **Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 and cannot cause COVID-19.

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?**

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for use in individuals 16 and older. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines both have been approved for use in individuals 18 and older.

Research is continuing and expanded clinical trials will study the vaccine safety and effectiveness in children and babies.

### **If I am pregnant, can I get a COVID vaccine?**

Yes. If you are pregnant, you may choose to be vaccinated when it is available to you. There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problem with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta.

People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them. There is no evidence that fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines. There is no routine recommendation for taking a pregnancy test before you get a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have questions about getting vaccinated, talking with a healthcare provider may help you make an informed decision.

### **What are the ingredients in the vaccines?**

All three vaccines currently available have fact sheets for recipients and caregivers that list the ingredients of each vaccine. Those factsheets can be found at:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(fda.gov\)](#), and
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(fda.gov\)](#), and
- [Johnson & Johnson Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(fda.gov\)](#).

### **How many doses of vaccine will I need?**

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses. The Pfizer vaccine doses are administered three weeks apart, and the Moderna vaccine doses are given 28 days apart. The first dose offers partial protection and the second acts as a booster. Both doses are needed to get the most protection the vaccines have to offer against COVID-19.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a single dose vaccine.

All the COVID vaccines currently available are administered intramuscularly (into the muscle, just like a flu shot).

### **What if I cannot get my second dose of COVID vaccine within the recommended time frame?**

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the second dose of the vaccine can be administered up to 42 days, or six weeks, after the initial inoculation

### **How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The Pfizer vaccine showed a 95% efficacy rate 7 days after the second dose. The vaccine was 94% effective in adults >65 years old.

The Moderna vaccine showed a 94% efficacy rate 14% days after the second dose. These results were consistent across gender, age, and ethnicity.

J&J's vaccine was 72% effective in the U.S. and 66% effective overall at preventing moderate-to-severe COVID-19. The vaccine also offered "complete protection" against COVID-related hospitalization and death at day 28.

### **How long does protection from a COVID-19 vaccine last?**

We do not yet know how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

## **If I had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to be vaccinated?**

Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

## **Do I still need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others once I have been vaccinated?**

Yes. To protect yourself and others, follow these recommendations:

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces
- Wash your hands frequently

## **Will the COVID-19 vaccine be free?**

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine will be free. Vaccine providers may be able to charge administration fees for giving the shot, but they will be billed to insurance with no out of pocket cost to the patient.

## **Is the vaccine safe?**

Safety is a key concern among health officials and experts. Before the FDA approves a vaccine, the manufacturer must do rigorous research and testing to ensure the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. The FDA independently reviews and verifies the information from these tests. It then decides whether the vaccine can be licensed and given to the public.

For each vaccine authorized by the FDA, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) carefully reviews all available data about the vaccine from clinical trials and other studies and makes recommendations for vaccine use in the general public. Recommendations include groups that should and should not receive the vaccine, as well as the timing, volume, number, and spacing of doses in a vaccine series.

The FDA and CDC continue to closely monitor vaccine safety after the public begins using the vaccine. Both agencies have longstanding and new safety systems in place for heightened monitoring of all COVID-19 vaccines.

## **What is an EUA?**

In certain public health emergencies, FDA may issue an Emergency Use Authorization or EUA which allows a drug or vaccine to be used when there are no sufficient treatments or vaccines available. The FDA may grant an EUA once studies have demonstrated the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine but before the manufacturer has

submitted a license application and/or before the FDA has completed its formal review of the license application.

### **What is ACIP?**

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is a panel of medical and public health experts and medical ethicists who develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the United States. The recommendations provide public health guidance for safe use of vaccines and related biological products.

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