



## GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE IT'S SAFE AND IT WORKS!

Facts about vaccine safety  
and how you can prevent COVID-19

Learn more at [hpsm.org/covid-19/vaccination](https://hpsm.org/covid-19/vaccination)

### Why is it important to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Although most people who have COVID-19 have mild symptoms, COVID-19 can also cause severe illness and even death. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is important because it can help:

- ✓ Keep your family and community safe
- ✓ Bring the pandemic to an end
- ✓ Bring us back together in the future, including being able to have gatherings and allowing kids to return to in-person learning

### How can the vaccines be safe if they were developed so fast?

The quick development of the COVID-19 vaccine was possible because:

- The vaccines were based on decades of research. Scientists have been studying coronaviruses for over 20 years. The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is just one of many types of coronavirus.
- Scientists from around the world shared their data with each other.
- A lot of funding from around the world went into the research.
- Many people signed up quickly to be part of the vaccine studies.

The FDA did *not* skip any steps in testing the COVID-19 vaccines for safety and success. The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same drug testing methods that experts have used for decades to make sure they are safe and work.

To date the FDA has approved three COVID-19 vaccines:

**moderna**

**Pfizer**

**Johnson & Johnson**

### How do the vaccines help protect me from COVID-19?

The vaccines work by telling your cells to make a harmless protein found in COVID-19. By protecting you from the protein, your body learns how to protect you from COVID-19. **None of the COVID-19 vaccines change your genes in any way.**

- **Pfizer and Moderna are both mRNA vaccines.** They use messenger RNA (mRNA) to tell the body's cells to make the protein. Both vaccines fully protect against COVID-19 in around [95% of cases](#).
- **Johnson & Johnson is a viral vector vaccine.** It uses an altered, harmless cold virus to tell the body's cells to make the protein. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine fully protects against COVID-19 in [72% of cases](#). Its use was briefly paused, but since state and federal authorities declared the vaccine safe, San Mateo County Health started using it again. The vaccine will have a warning label and information materials so residents can decide if they want the vaccine.

## Can the COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

The COVID-19 vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID-19. You may have side effects after getting the vaccine. This does not mean you have COVID-19. It is a normal sign that the vaccine is working. Common side effects are:

- Pain swelling and redness in the arm where you got shot
- Chills, tiredness and headaches throughout the rest of your body

Most side effects are mild to moderate and should go away within three days. If they do not, or if you have any questions, call your primary care provider (PCP) or HPSM's Nurse Advice Line at **1-833-846-8773**.

## I had COVID-19. Should I still get the vaccine?

Yes, you should still get the vaccine even if you had COVID-19. Experts don't know how long people are protected from COVID-19 after they get over it. If you get COVID-19 again, you also risk getting others around you sick.

## I have health issues, should I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

If you have health issues such as heart disease, diabetes or lung disease, you can and should get vaccinated. It may be even more vital for you to get vaccinated. That is because people with health issues are more likely to get very sick or die from COVID-19.



Call your PCP before you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- Have more questions about whether it is safe for you to take the vaccine
- Have allergies to Polyethylene glycol (PEG) or Polysorbate
- Are unsure about your allergies

## Should pregnant and nursing women get vaccinated?

Based on current evidence, health experts believe the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for pregnant women, women who plan to get pregnant someday and nursing mothers.

## How much does the COVID-19 vaccine cost?

HPSM members get the vaccine at no cost. For more information about how to schedule your appointment visit [hpsm.org/vax](https://hpsm.org/vax).