# COVID-19 Vaccine Guide

**It has never been easier to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in New York State! Anyone age 5 and older is eligible.**

## Why get vaccinated?

**COVID-19 vaccines are effective and can:**

- ☑ Reduce the risk of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19

- ☑ Prevent children and adults from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19

- ☑ Help protect from serious short- and long-term complications from COVID-19

- ☑ Getting everyone vaccinated can protect families and communities, including friends and family who are not eligible for vaccination and people at increased risk for severe illness.

- ☑ After people are fully vaccinated, they can resume many activities that they did before the pandemic.

- ☑ Proof of vaccination is increasingly required by municipalities and businesses to enter certain spaces or participate in certain types of activities.

**COVID-19 vaccines are FREE regardless of immigration status or insurance coverage.**

## Where can I get the vaccine?

**Vaccines are widely available at pharmacies, local health departments, clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and other locations across New York State.**

**To find an provider near you:**

- Visit Vaccines.gov

- 💬 Text your ZIP code to 438829

- 📞 Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 888-720-7489)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How were COVID-19 vaccines developed?

- Scientists have been working for many years to develop vaccines against coronaviruses. The knowledge that was gained through past research on coronavirus vaccines helped speed up the initial development of the current COVID-19 vaccines.
- After initial development, vaccines go through three phases of clinical trials to make sure they are safe and effective. For other vaccines routinely used in the United States, the three phases of clinical trials are performed one at a time. During the development of COVID-19 vaccines, these phases overlapped to speed up the process so they could be used as quickly as possible to control the pandemic. No trial phases have been skipped. The clinical trials have involved tens of thousands of volunteers of different ages, races, and ethnicities.
- Before vaccines are made available to people, the FDA assesses the findings from clinical trials. Initially, they determined that three COVID-19 vaccines met safety and effectiveness standards and granted those vaccines Emergency Use Authorizations. FDA has now granted full approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for people aged 16+. FDA has also authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children aged 5-11. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines continues to be monitored.

## How do the vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness.

There are currently three approved COVID-19 vaccines: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen.

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines.
- mRNA vaccines contain material from the virus that causes COVID-19 that gives our cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus. After our cells make copies of the protein, they destroy the genetic material from the vaccine. Our bodies recognize that the protein should not be there and build T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes (types of white blood cells) that will remember how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if we are infected in the future.

The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine is a vector vaccine.
- Vector vaccines contain a modified version of a different virus than the one that causes COVID-19. Inside the shell of the modified virus, there is material from the virus that causes COVID-19. This is called a "viral vector." Once the viral vector is inside our cells, the genetic material gives cells instructions to make a protein that is unique to the virus that causes COVID-19. Using these instructions, our cells make copies of the protein. This prompts our bodies to build T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight that virus if we are infected in the future.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the ingredients in the vaccines?

All COVID-19 vaccine ingredients are safe. Nearly all of the ingredients in vaccines are also the ingredients in foods – fats, sugars, and salts.

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines also contain a harmless piece of messenger RNA (mRNA).
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine also contains a harmless piece of modified virus that is not the virus that causes COVID-19.
- After the body produces an immune response, it discards all of the vaccine ingredients, just as it would discard any substance that cells no longer need. This process is a part of normal body functioning.
- A detailed list of ingredients for each vaccine is available at: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html

All COVID-19 vaccines have:

- NO preservatives like thimerosal or mercury or any other preservatives.
- NO antibiotics like sulfonamide or any other antibiotics.
- NO medicines or therapeutics like ivermectin or any other medications.
- NO tissues like aborted fetal cells, gelatin, or any materials from any animal.
- NO food proteins like eggs or egg products, gluten, peanuts, tree nuts, nut products, or any nut byproducts (COVID-19 vaccines are not manufactured in facilities that produce food products).
- NO metals like iron, nickel, cobalt, titanium, rare earth alloys, or any manufactured products like microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes or other nanostructures, or nanowire semiconductors.
- NO latex. The vial stoppers used to hold the vaccine also do not contain latex.

## What are possible side effects?

Adults and children may have some side effects from the vaccine, which are normal signs that their body is building protection. Common side effects include:

- On the arm where you got the shot:
  - Pain, redness, swelling
- Throughout the rest of your body:
  - Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, nausea

Side effects can affect you or your child's ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Contact a doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where the shot was given gets worse after 24 hours
- If the side effects are worrying or do not seem to be going away after a few days

Some people have no side effects, and allergic reactions are rare. If you had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose or if you have a known (diagnosed) allergy to a COVID-19 vaccine ingredient, you should not get that vaccine. If you have been instructed not to get one type of COVID-19 vaccine, you may still be able to get another type.

## What should I expect at my vaccine appointment?

- Bring proof of age to your vaccine appointments.
- You do NOT need to provide proof of immigration status, insurance, or a social security number to get vaccinated.
- Getting a free COVID-19 vaccine will NOT affect your Public Charge status.
- You will receive a CDC vaccination card upon initial vaccination. Bring the card when you get additional doses. You should take a photo of the card and keep it in a safe place.

# Different COVID-19 Vaccines

| | Pfizer-BioNTech | Moderna | Johnson & Johnson/ Janssen |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Who is eligible** | 6 months old and older | 6 months old and older | 18+ years old |
| **Primary series** | Ages 5 and up receive 2 doses given 3-8 weeks apart<br><br>Ages 6 months to 4 years receive 3 doses<br>• 2nd dose is given 3-8 weeks after 1st dose<br>• 3rd dose is given at least 8 weeks after 2nd dose<br><br>Moderately or severely immunocompromised people who received a Pfizer primary series should receive an additional dose of the same vaccine<br>• Ages 5 and up receive 3rd dose at least 4 weeks after their 2nd dose | Ages 6 months and up receive 2 doses given 4-8 weeks apart<br><br>Moderately or severely immunocompromised people who received a Moderna primary series should receive an additional dose of the same vaccine<br>• Ages 6 months and up receive 3rd dose at least 4 weeks after their 2nd dose | Ages 18 and up receive 1 dose<br><br>Moderately or severely immunocompromised people should get a 2nd dose of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna at least 4 weeks after their 1st dose in the primary series of J&J. |
| **Up to Date**<br>Boosters<br>• Pfizer or Moderna (mRNA vaccines) are preferred.<br>• The 2nd booster must be an mRNA vaccine.<br>• Those ages 5–17 can only get a Pfizer booster | Everyone ages 5+ should get a booster, at least 5 months (at least 3 months for immunocompromised) after completed primary series. | Adults ages 18+ should get a booster, at least 5 months (at least 3 months for immunocompromised) after completed primary series. | Adults ages 18+ should get a Pfizer or Moderna booster, at least 2 months after primary dose.<br><br>Those ages 18-49 with J&J primary dose and 1st booster can choose to get a 2nd booster at least 4 months after the 1st booster. |

Adults ages 50+ and those both ages 12+ and immunocompromised should get a second booster, at least 4 months after the first booster.

# Resources

## If you need more information on COVID-19, including testing and vaccines, you can contact your county health department for free assistance:

**Buffalo/Western New York**

Erie County Department of Health
716-858-7690
erie.gov/health

Niagara County Department of Health
716-439-7435
www.niagaracounty.com/Health

Chautauqua County Health Department
716-753-4590
chqgov.com/public-health/public-health

Cattaraugus County Health Department
716-373-8050
cattco.org/health

Allegany County Department of Health
585-268-9250
alleganyco.gov/health

**Rochester/Finger Lakes**

Monroe County Department of Public Health
585-753-2991
monroecounty.gov/health

Livingston County Department of Health
585-243-7270
livingstoncounty.us/172/Department-of-Health

Orleans County Health Department
585-589-3278
gohealthny.org

Genesee County Public Health Department
585-344-2580
gohealthny.org

Wyoming County Health Department
585-786-8890
wyomingco.net/203/Health-Department

Wayne County Public Health
315-946-5749
wcphny.com

Ontario County Public Health
585-396-4343
ontariocountyny.gov/101/Public-Health

Yates County Public Health
315-536-5160
yatescounty.org/211/Public-Health

Seneca County Health Department
315-539-1920
senecacountyhealthdepartment.com

### Vaccine access

- All private and public sector workers in New York State, regardless of employer size and immigration status, are entitled to New York State Paid Leave for COVID-19 vaccinations. This is effective from 3/12/2021 to 12/31/2022. Workers get up to 4 hours per vaccine injection, including the initial dose/series and booster shots.
- If you are homebound and unable to access vaccines due to physical limitations, chronic conditions, or a lack of transportation, you can request free in-home vaccinations by contacting your county health department.