

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

BOARD OF HEALTH

YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

January 19, 2021

General information

Who is eligible to get the vaccine?

The state has outlined the first two phases of people who are able to get the vaccine, calling them Phase 1A and Phase 1B. Please visit www.ccbh.net/vax to learn more.

Can people with medical conditions get the vaccine?

There are no specific diseases which would keep someone from getting the covid vaccine, but if they have certain health conditions (see below), they should check with their doctor.

Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant?

Right now, we do not have much information about pregnancy and the covid vaccine. Experts believe that the active ingredient in the vaccine, which is called mRNA, is not a risk for pregnant moms because the mRNA degrades very quickly and does not enter the nucleus of the cells.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggest that pregnant moms speak with their doctor to find out if the vaccine is the right choice for them.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that the vaccine be given to pregnant moms who are in a priority group, like those who work in a nursing home or healthcare center.

Can I get the vaccine while nursing?

If the breastfeeding mom is part of a priority group based on the state vaccine guidelines, she can get the vaccine.

What if I have a weakened immune system because of medication or a medical condition?

Having a weakened immune system, which is also called being immunocompromised, means that your body can't fight off illness and disease as well as it should. This can happen because of medicine you take or a medical condition that you have.

If this sounds like you, talk with your doctor to be sure that the vaccine is right for you.

There is a lack of information about mRNA vaccines in people who are immunocompromised, although people with well-controlled HIV were included in clinical trials.

Can children get the vaccine?

Children ages 16-17 can get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine if they are in a priority group that can receive the vaccine. Those under 16 cannot get the Pfizer vaccine. New trials are underway in which children 12 years of age are receiving the vaccine.

The Moderna vaccine can be given to persons 18 years of age or older.

Should I get the vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

Yes, the COVID vaccine should still be offered to anyone who tested positive, whether or not they had symptoms. You need to be out of isolation and recovered from symptoms before taking the vaccine.

Should I get the vaccine if I currently have COVID-19?

No. You need to wait until they you are out of isolation and over your symptoms before taking the vaccine.

Should I get the vaccine while waiting for my COVID-19 test results?

Can I get the vaccine if I am quarantine because I was exposed to a close contact who has COVID-19?

No for both questions. If you are waiting for test results, stay home until you know if you are positive or negative for COVID-19. If you are in quarantine, wait until the quarantine period has ended. This helps to keep those around you safe in case you become sick or are sick without showing symptoms (asymptomatic).

If you work in congregate settings such as nursing homes, group homes, assisted living, etc., we recommend that you get vaccinated in these situations to protect your co-workers, your patients and your family.

Do either of the vaccines contain mercury-based preservatives?

No. In the past mercury-based preservatives were present in some vaccines in amounts small enough to pose no health risks. The current COVID-19 vaccines contain no such ingredients.

Should I wait to get the vaccine to see how other people react to it?

That is your decision to make. What we want you to remember is that every day, you run the risk of catching covid because it so widespread in the community. Passing on the vaccine when it is offered also means that you could wait a long time for it to come around to you again.

Side Effects

What are common side effects of the vaccines?

Some people experience mild to moderate pain in their arm muscle where they receive the shot. In the clinical trials held before the vaccine was released to the public, only 1% of all of the age groups reported severe pain for both the first and second doses. 99% of the time, arm pain went away in 1-2 days.

Fatigue (tiredness) and headache happened in about 40-60% of patients.
Chills and fever was noted in 16% of cases.

These side effects have been more common among younger age groups (under 55 years of age) and usually go away within 1-2 days.

How common are serious/severe reactions?

Severe reactions are extremely rare. Please talk with your doctor if you have concerns or have had reactions to prior vaccinations.

Is it common for patients to feel faint or light-headed after vaccination?

Fainting can happen after any type of vaccination. Doctors believe that fainting happens due to a person's anxiety, or nervous feelings, about the process and not from the effects of the medicine. This has not been reported as a common side effect of these COVID-19 vaccines.

What if I have had reactions to other vaccines?

Talk with your doctor before getting the COVID-19 or any other vaccine.

If you do have a severe allergic reaction after getting your first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you should not get the second shot. Check with your doctor, who may refer you to a specialist to provide more care or advice.

What if I have other allergies?

The CDC said that people with a history of severe allergic reactions to things other than medicine such as animals, environmental conditions, food, latex or venom should get vaccinated.

If you have a history of allergies to oral medications, a family history of severe allergic reactions, or if you have milder allergy to vaccines, meaning there is no anaphylaxis, you can get vaccinated.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The vaccine does not contain the whole virus, just one of its proteins, so it cannot cause you to get the virus.

After Vaccination

If I have a slight fever, is it okay to take medicine to bring my fever down, like Tylenol or Ibuprofen?

That is not recommended because we don't know how it might affect your body's immune response to the vaccine.

Pregnant women should avoid taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) such as ibuprofen.

Do I still need to wear a mask and socially distance?

Yes. The vaccine has prevented people from getting sick from the virus, but it is not known how well the vaccine prevents people from spreading the disease who are asymptomatic (showing no signs of illness).

How long does the vaccine protection last?

We don't know yet. At some point in the future, covid vaccines may be given every year, like flu shots. This would protect someone from the original Covid-19 virus as well as other strains, also called variants, that show up.

What are the differences in the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines?

Type of vaccine: both are mRNA vaccines

Number of doses: Both require two doses.

Waiting period between doses: Pfizer 21 days/Moderna 28 days

Side effects: similar in type and frequency

Minimum age to receive: Pfizer 16 years old/Moderna 18 years old

Storage: Pfizer requires colder temperatures than Moderna

Can the vaccine cause me to spread the virus?

No. The vaccine does not contain whole virus, just one of its proteins, so you cannot spread the virus to anyone else.

Is it helpful to get vaccinated with different types – Pfizer and Moderna?

No. It is not recommended that you receive different versions of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. The safety and success of mixing the products (two separate vaccines for the two doses) has not been evaluated.

Will I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine every year, similar to the flu vaccine?

We don't know yet how long the protection from the COVID-19 vaccine will last. It is possible that people may need booster shots sometime in the future.

It is also possible that, as the virus evolves, the vaccine may need to be updated to match it. We know that the COVID-19 virus changes more slowly than the flu viruses.

What happens if I get a second dose with a different vaccine, meaning dose 1 was Pfizer and dose 2 is Moderna?

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are not meant to be mixed with each other.

The safety and success of a mixed-product series (using two different vaccines for each of the two shots) has not been evaluated.

If this accidentally happens, consult with your doctor before receiving additional vaccine.

You should receive a card when you get your first dose that tells you the date and the kind of vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) that you received. Check that when making your appointment for a second dose. Also, bring the card with you to your second appointment to double-check that you are receiving the right vaccine.

Will the vaccine protect me against the new UK variant of COVID-19?

Yes, the vaccine should be effective against the new variant.

Will being vaccinated affect future COVID-19 tests or antibody tests for the virus?

The vaccination will not affect the viral COVID-19 tests, neither the PCR or antigen tests. However, since both vaccines contain the proteins for COVID-19, both could affect the antibody tests. Be sure to consult with your doctor if you have specific questions about COVID-19 testing after having the vaccine.

Resources

<https://www.ccbh.net/covid-19-information-and-resources/>

www.ccbh.net/vax

www.coronavirus.ohio.gov

CCBH Call Center – 216.201.2000 Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.