

Patient-Community Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is the COVID-19 vaccine an injection? How many doses are needed?

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are injections that are given in the muscle of the upper arm (deltoid muscle), similar to a flu vaccine. Both vaccines are given as 2 separate doses. The Pfizer vaccine doses are separated by 21 days and the Moderna vaccine doses are separated by 28 days.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do NOT contain any parts of the COVID-19 virus. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.

Will I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing after I receive both doses of vaccine?

Yes, it is still recommended to follow all steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection even after you receive the vaccine. To reduce the spread of the virus, continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, wash your hands often, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, monitor for symptoms of infection.

If I already had COVID-19, should I get the vaccine?

Yes, it is still recommended to get the COVID-19 vaccine even if you already had a COVID-19 infection. If you are actively sick (have symptoms), you should wait to receive the vaccine until your COVID-related symptoms are better, it has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started and you haven't had a fever in at least 24 hours.

I received treatment for COVID-19 with convalescent plasma or bamlanivimab or casirivimab/imdevimab, can I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended you wait to get your COVID-19 vaccine for at least 90 days to avoid interference of the treatment with the vaccine.

I was exposed to COVID-19 recently, should I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended you wait to get your COVID-19 vaccine for at least 14 days while you complete your recommended quarantine time period. This will reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Should people with immunocompromising conditions, including HIV, get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, these individuals may still get the COVID-19 vaccine, unless told otherwise by their provider or physician. Immunocompromised individuals may have a reduced immune response to the COVID-19 vaccine and should continue to follow all COVID-19 guidelines to protect themselves (social distancing, masks, etc).

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

A pregnant or breastfeeding woman may choose to receive the Pfizer OR Moderna vaccine if desired. It is recommended that pregnant or breastfeeding women consult with their obstetrician (OB) to weigh the risks and benefits of vaccination prior to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Pregnant and lactating women were not included in the Pfizer OR Moderna COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. In these cases, SCL Health will provide a vaccine with OB approval.

Should I receive a vaccine if I have a history of severe allergic reaction to a vaccine, medicine or food?

The following individuals should NOT receive the Pfizer OR Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at this time (this information may change as additional data is collected):

- Known polyethylene glycol (PEG) allergic reaction
- Previous severe allergic reaction to any component of the Pfizer OR Moderna COVID-19 vaccine

The following individuals should consult a healthcare provider to weigh the risks and benefits of receiving the Pfizer OR Moderna COVID-19 vaccine:

- Previous severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to ANY vaccine or injectable therapy (If you choose to get the COVID-19 vaccine, you will be observed for 30 minutes in case of a severe reaction.)

If you have any of the following, you may receive the Pfizer OR Moderna COVID-19 vaccine:

- Food allergy (including shellfish)
- Pet, insect or venom allergy
- Environmental allergies
- Latex allergy
- Previous allergic reaction to oral medications
- Non-serious allergy (non-anaphylactic) to other vaccine and/or injectable medications
- Family history of anaphylaxis
- History of anaphylaxis not related to a vaccine or injectable therapy (with 30 minute observation period after COVID-19 vaccine)

What if I experience side effects after receiving my COVID-19 vaccine?

Common side effects may include pain, redness and swelling on your arm where you received the vaccine. You may also experience fever, chills, tiredness, headache, swelling of the lymph

nodes, nausea, muscle aches or joint pain. These side effects are usually mild and resolve within 24-48 hours after receiving the vaccine.

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider 1) If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours
2) If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days.

CDC has learned of reports that some people have experienced severe allergic reactions—also known as anaphylaxis—after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. As an example, an allergic reaction is considered severe when a person has difficulty breathing, needs to be treated with epinephrine or EpiPen® or if they must go to the hospital.

If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital.

Call your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

Report vaccine side effects to **FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)**. The VAERS toll-free number is 1-800-822-7967 or report online to <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>. Please include “Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine EUA” or “Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine EUA” in the first line of box #18 of the report form.

In addition, you can report side effects to [ModernaTX, Inc.](#) at 1-866-MODERNA (1-866-663-3762) if you received the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. You can report side effects to [Pfizer Inc.](#) at www.pfizersaftyreporting.com, fax: 1-866-635-8337, phone: 1-800-438-1985.

You may also be given an option to enroll in **v-safe**. **V-safe** is a new voluntary smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to check in with people who have been vaccinated to identify potential side effects after COVID-19 vaccination. **V-safe** asks questions that help CDC monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. **V-safe** also provides second-dose reminders if needed and live telephone follow-up by CDC if participants report a significant health impact following COVID-19 vaccination. For more information on how to sign up, visit: www.cdc.gov/vsafe.

When do I need to return for my second dose of vaccine?

You may receive your second Pfizer vaccine as early as 17 days after their first dose. At SCL Health, we recommend you schedule your second dose for 19 to 23 days after you receive your first dose. You will make your appointment for your second dose during your appointment for your first dose.

You may receive your second Moderna vaccine as early as 24 days after your first dose. At SCL Health, we recommend you schedule your second dose for 26 to 30 days after you receive your first dose. You will make your appointment for your 2nd dose during your appointment for your first dose.

What happens if I miss my second dose?

If you miss your second dose of vaccine (it has been more than 21 days (Pfizer) or 28 days (Moderna) since your first dose), you should get it as soon as possible. Both doses are necessary for protection.

If I received the Pfizer OR Moderna vaccine for my first dose, can I receive a different COVID-19 vaccine for my second dose?

If you received the Pfizer vaccine for your first dose, you should receive the Pfizer vaccine for your second dose. If you received the Moderna vaccine for your first dose, you should receive the Moderna vaccine for your second dose.

The Pfizer AND Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable with each other OR other potential COVID-19 vaccines that may become available. The safety and efficacy of “mixing” vaccines has not been established.

Should I take medications like ibuprofen or acetaminophen prior to the vaccination?

No. It is not recommended.

If I develop mild symptoms (fever, muscle aches) after receiving a dose of the vaccine, can I take medication to help?

Yes, you may take an antipyretic/analgesic, such as over-the-counter acetaminophen if you experience bothersome symptoms such as fever, muscle aches or headache.

If the vaccine is working, how soon will a person who gets it be protected?

If you receive the Pfizer vaccine, you may be protected as early as 7 days after your second dose. If you receive the Moderna vaccine, you may be protected as early as 14 days after your second dose. Remember, no vaccine is 100% effective, so continuing to practice infection prevention guidelines (social distancing, wear a mask, avoid crowds, frequent hand washing, etc) is of the utmost importance.

Has the Pfizer vaccine reported any serious adverse events or neurologic conditions?

In both the Pfizer and Moderna clinical trials, there were no reports of any neurologic conditions or symptoms reported. Serious adverse events (SAE) were similar between the COVID-19 vaccine and the placebo group in clinical trials.

What COVID-19 Vaccine(s) are currently available?

The Pfizer (BNT162b2) and the Moderna (mRNA-1273) COVID-19 vaccines are currently available through Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

Can I choose which vaccine I receive?

No, at this time we cannot guarantee which vaccine you will receive.

What is Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

Under section 564 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act), the FDA Commissioner may allow unapproved medical products or unapproved uses of approved medical products to be used in an emergency to diagnose, treat, or prevent serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions caused by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threat agents when there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives.

How long will immunity to COVID-19 last?

At this time, long-term immunity data with the COVID-19 vaccine is not available. As data emerges from the vaccine manufacturer or CDC, updates will be provided.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine contain Thimerosal (mercury)?

No, the multi-dose vial of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine is preservative-free and does not contain thimerosal (mercury).

Does the COVID-19 vaccine vial contain latex?

No, the Pfizer vaccine is contained in a clear glass vial with a bromobutyl (rubber) stopper. This is a non-latex rubber and is safe for patients with a latex allergy.

No, the Moderna vaccine vial stoppers are not made with natural rubber latex.

Can I receive additional vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?

No, the COVID-19 vaccine should be administered alone. Do NOT receive any additional vaccines for 14 days before or after the COVID-19 vaccine. Do NOT receive any additional vaccines between the two COVID-19 vaccine doses. If you have received a live vaccine for a different reason, note that the general guidance is to avoid all vaccines for 4 weeks after a live vaccination.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory?

No, the vaccine is not mandatory, but highly encouraged for individuals that are eligible to receive. It is your choice to receive or not receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. Should you decide not to receive it, it will not change your standard medical care.

How much will it cost for me to be vaccinated?

SCL will not be charging patients for vaccine administration. Your insurance may be billed.

For additional vaccine information, please visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>.