

# What New Yorkers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

New York City is committed to keeping everyone safe and healthy by ensuring that access to COVID-19 vaccines is fair and equitable. **COVID-19 vaccines will likely be available for most New Yorkers by mid-2021.** Some people, such as health care workers, essential workers who cannot separate from others, and older adults and other people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will have access to the vaccine sooner.

When you get vaccinated, you are helping to protect yourself and your family and friends. You are also helping to make your community safer. We know New Yorkers care about their communities, including health care workers and small business owners.

## Do the vaccines work?

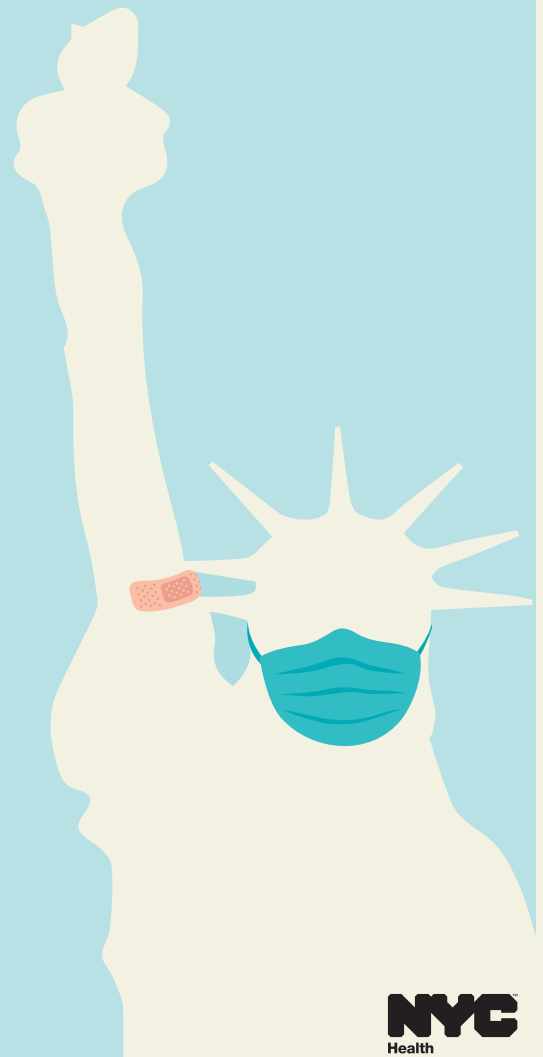
- Two COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) have been approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In clinical studies, both vaccines were more than 94% effective at protecting participants from COVID-19.

## Are the vaccines safe?

- **Yes. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.** The vaccine does not contain the virus. It teaches your body's immune system how to fight the virus, so it can fight the virus if you are exposed to it.
- The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through large clinical studies involving tens of thousands of people of various ages, races and ethnicities. The evidence from those studies was closely reviewed by the FDA and independent organizations.
- Researchers have been working on vaccines for coronaviruses for years, so they did not start from scratch.

## Are there side effects?

- It is normal to experience side effects after the first or second dose of the vaccine. Common side effects include soreness in the arm where you got the shot, tiredness or a headache.
- If you have any questions or concerns, call **311** or talk to your health care provider.
- Side effects can be unpleasant, but getting vaccinated helps protect you and other New Yorkers.



## Who can get a vaccine and how much will it cost?

- All New Yorkers age 16 and older will have access to a vaccine once it is more widely available. We have already started vaccinating people at increased risk, such as health care workers.
- The vaccine is free for everyone. If you have insurance, it may be billed but you will not be charged a copay or other fee.
- You do not need to share your immigration status to be vaccinated. Getting vaccinated is not a public benefit under the public charge rule.
- When you receive the vaccine, your privacy will be protected. There are strict laws in place to ensure confidentiality of your personal information.

## Where can I get a vaccine?

- When the vaccine is more readily available, you will be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine where you normally get vaccines, such as at your health care provider's office, pharmacies, clinics and urgent care centers. Additional community vaccination sites will be set up throughout the city.
- There will be a vaccination site map on the NYC Health Department's website.

## Should I get a vaccine if I already had COVID-19?

- Yes, since it is possible to get COVID-19 again, you should be vaccinated. Also, the vaccine is safe and may boost the protection your body has already built up. However, if you tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days, consider waiting to get the vaccine, since it is very unlikely that you will get COVID-19 again during this time. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions.

## When I get vaccinated, can I stop physical distancing and wearing a face covering?

- No. We do not have enough information to say if or when it will be safe to stop physical distancing and wearing face coverings. Until we understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide, everyone must continue the key prevention measures:
  - Stay home if you are sick, have COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
  - Maintain at least 6 feet of distance from people who are not members of your household.
  - Wear a face covering (over your mouth and nose) when outside your home.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water or clean with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

It is understandable that some people may be nervous about getting a COVID-19 vaccine or may have more questions. To learn more, talk to your health care provider, call **311**, or visit [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine) or [cdc.gov/covidvaccine](https://cdc.gov/covidvaccine).