

Corona Virus Vaccine Information

You have heard all about this virus and now the vaccine, how do you know what is true? Are there reasons you should get it? Are you in a priority category? Here's what you should know....

Facts vs Myths

- **MYTH:** If I've already had COVID-19, I don't need a vaccine.
FACT: People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.
- **MYTH:** Researchers rushed the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, so its effectiveness and safety cannot be trusted.
FACT: Studies found that the two initial vaccines are both about 95% effective — and reported no serious or life-threatening side effects. There are many reasons why the COVID-19 vaccines could be developed so quickly. Here are just a few:
 1. The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna were created with a method that has been in development for years, so the companies could start the vaccine development process early in the pandemic.
 2. China isolated and shared genetic information about COVID-19 promptly, so scientists could start working on vaccines.
 3. The vaccine developers didn't skip any testing steps, but conducted some of the steps on an overlapping schedule to gather data faster.
- **MYTH:** Getting the COVID-19 vaccine means I can stop wearing my mask and taking coronavirus precautions.
FACT: Individuals who get the COVID-19 vaccination still need to practice infection prevention precautions. Keep your mask on, and continue staying at least 6 feet from people outside your household, until further notice. Vaccines do not stop the coronavirus from entering your body; they only prevent you from developing moderate to severe COVID-19. It's not yet clear if people vaccinated for COVID-19 can still carry and transmit the virus, even when they themselves don't get sick.
- **MYTH:** Getting the COVID-19 vaccine gives you COVID-19.
FACT: The vaccine for COVID-19 cannot and will not give you COVID-19. The two authorized mRNA vaccines instruct your cells to reproduce a protein that is part of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which helps your body recognize and fight the virus, if it comes along. The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain the SARS-

Co-2 virus, so you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The protein that helps your immune system recognize and fight the virus does not cause infection of any sort.

- **MYTH:** The side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are dangerous.
FACT: The COVID-19 vaccine can have side effects, but the vast majority are very short term —not serious or dangerous. The vaccine developers report that some people experience pain where they were injected; body aches; headaches or fever, lasting for a day or two. These are signs that the vaccine is working to stimulate your immune system. If symptoms persist beyond two days, you should call your doctor. If you have allergies — especially severe ones that require you to carry an EpiPen — discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your doctor, who can assess your risk and provide more information about if and how you can get vaccinated safely.

*information gathered from Johns Hopkins Medicine

Am I eligible?

Currently those in groups 1a and 1b are eligible. This includes:

Residents and staff at nursing homes and other congregate care facilities

Staff and residents at OPWDD, OMH and OASAS facilities

Home care workers

Hospice workers

Individuals Age 65 and older

Individuals living in a homeless shelter where sleeping, bathing or eating accommodations must be shared with individuals and families who are not part of the same household

And many, many others such as health care workers, teachers, police, etc. The full list can be found at: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/phased-distribution-vaccine>

Beginning February 15, 2021:

Adult New Yorkers of any age with the many conditions will qualify for the vaccine; some conditions include:

Cancer (current or in remission, including 9/11-related cancers)

Chronic kidney disease

Pulmonary Disease, including but not limited to, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), asthma (moderate-to-severe), pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis, and 9/11 related pulmonary diseases

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities including Down Syndrome

Heart conditions

Immunocompromised state

Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus

Neurologic conditions including but not limited to Alzheimer's Disease or dementia

Liver disease

These are just some of the qualifying conditions. A full list can be found at:

<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/phased-distribution-vaccine>

Where to get the vaccine

- If you are a veteran, contact your primary care doctor at Veterans Affairs to make sure they are aware you want to receive the vaccine, they have some supply and are contacting those who have indicated interest as they have it available. The helpline telephone number for NYS veterans' affairs helpline is: 1-888-838-7697.
- State vaccination sites are by appointment. Appointments are made online at <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov> and click "get started".
- You can contact your local pharmacy; many are receiving supply specifically for those over the age of 65. For those with a local Walgreens, you can find out if the vaccine is available near you at: www.walgreens.com and click "Coronavirus19 vaccine information". For those with a CVS local to them, go to www.cvs.com and click on check vaccine availability.
- For homebound individuals, many counties are working through their local Office for the Aging or paramedic companies. To find out if your county is doing this, call you local county Health Department of Office for the Aging.

Did you know?

- Hispanic, African American and American Indian populations have more than two and a half times the mortality rate from COVID 19 than the White population.
- Hispanic, African American and American Indian populations are nearly 4x as likely to be admitted to the hospital for serious complications from COVID 19 than the White population.
- Many rural communities are considered highly vulnerable according to CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). Factors such as high rates of underlying health conditions, low rates of access to health care/telehealth options and lower rates of health care insurance contribute to the concern for COVID 19's impact on rural residents.

