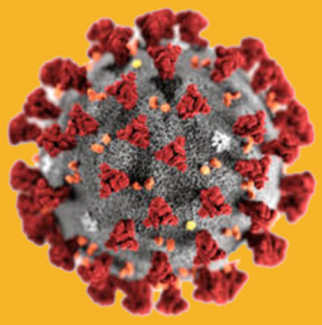
TEAMSTERS SAFETY & HEALTH Coronavirus



COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunization

Coronavirus (COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2)

January 8, 2021

WHAT IS VACCINATION?

Vaccination[1] is a safe and effective way to prevent disease and save lives by administering a vaccine that helps support the body's natural immune system. Vaccines save the lives of up to 3 million people every year.[2] When a person gets vaccinated against a disease, their risk of infection is reduced, so they are far less likely to transmit it to others. As more people in a community get vaccinated, fewer people remain vulnerable, and there is less possibility for passing the pathogen on from person to person.

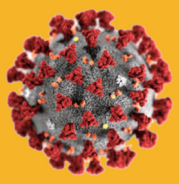
A vaccine reduces the risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defenses to build protection. Once you get a vaccine, your immune system will respond by:

- Recognizing the invading germ (virus or bacteria)
- Producing **Antibodies***

  ***Antibodies are proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight disease.**

- Remembering the disease markers and how to fight it.
  - If you are exposed to the germ, your immune system can quickly recognize and destroy it before you become sick.

[1] Vaccines and immunization: What is Vaccination?
[2] Why is vaccination important?



WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

The most effective way to prevent an illness is vaccination. Safe and effective vaccines have been used for more than 60 years.[3] Acquired immunity from a vaccine may have a limit; therefore, each person should be aware of the time limit for the vaccine received.

Vaccinations have been used for years and have proven effective in protection against several pathogens and seasonal viruses such as influenza.[4] Without vaccines, we are at risk of severe illness and disability from the disease. In emergency situations such as during an active pandemic, vaccinations such as the COVID-19 vaccination have been approved for emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in advance of an anticipated full FDA authorization, which may take many months to years.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that vaccines save between 2 and 3 million lives every year.[5]

Two Key Reasons:

- To reduce your chance of contracting the seasonal influenza virus and COVID-19 virus.
- To protect others in the workplace and community.

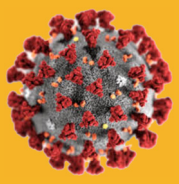
WHAT INGREDIENTS ARE INSIDE THE VACCINE?

The ingredients of a vaccine play an essential role in ensuring that it is safe and effective.

- The key ingredients in both the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines are genetic material (mRNA) wrapped in lipids (oils) and carried in a saline solution.[6] Both vaccines use strands of laboratory-made mRNA to trigger an immune response in your body. After you get vaccinated, your immune system will be able to make antibodies quickly, or specialized proteins that can fight off the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Many components used in vaccines occur naturally in the body, our environment, and in the foods we eat. Influenza and COVID-19 are predominantly considered respiratory illnesses that can affect other organs and lead to serious health conditions. Vaccines can help save lives and prevent future illness.

- Flu vaccines contain tiny amounts of the flu viruses that the vaccine is designed to protect against. The presence of the inactive flu viruses triggers the body's natural immune system to create antibodies to fight the viruses. Our bodies remember the virus so it can quickly recognize future exposure and launch an immediate response. Flu vaccines also

[3] https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)
[4] CDC: Flu Season
[5] WHO estimates for vaccines that save lives
[6] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf



contain small amounts of formaldehyde, aluminum salts, thimerosal (preservative to extend shelf life), chicken egg proteins, gelatin, and antibiotics.[7]

Unlike the influenza vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine does not contain a dead or a weakened virus that triggers an immune response. Instead, the COVID-19 vaccine contains a genetic instruction manual that tells your immune system how to respond and protect you from exposure to the actual virus.

HOW WILL COVID-19 VACCINATIONS BE ADMINISTERED TO THE PUBLIC?

The CDC has been working closely with health departments, emergency management agencies, and state-level public health agencies to develop vaccination plans at all levels. States have partnered with hospitals and healthcare systems, pharmacies, mobile vaccination providers, occupational health settings for large employers, community health centers, and local health departments to administer COVID-19 vaccines to ensure equal access to essential workers.[8] Each state has developed a pandemic vaccination plan specific to their region.

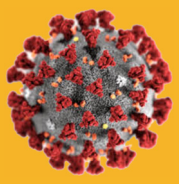
COVID-19 vaccinations will be dispersed in a phased approach:

- Phase I: Limited supply of vaccine doses are available
  - COVID-19 vaccine doses are given to a limited population (healthcare workers, high-risk population)
- Phase II: Focused on ensuring all critical populations are vaccinated that were not completed in Phase I.
  - Larger doses of the vaccine will be available
  - The general population will also be vaccinated
- Phase III: A sufficient supply of vaccine doses will be available for the entire population.

WHERE IS COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED INTO THE BODY?

The vaccine is administered as an intramuscular (I.M.) injection in the upper arm's deltoid muscle[9]. The needle size is (1-1.5-inches)[10] , and the site of injection will be decided for each person based on the size of the muscle and thickness of the individual's arm.

[7] Flu shot ingredients: What they contain and why (medicalnewstoday.com)
[8] https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/downloads/COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf
[9] https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/guide.pdf
[10] Interim COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Guide (state.mn.us)



HOW MANY DOSES OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE WILL BE NEEDED?

Most COVID-19 vaccines will require two shots for them to be effective.[11] The same vaccine made by the same manufacturer must be administered for both first and second doses.[12] COVID-19 vaccine products are not interchangeable. The first shot starts building protection. The second shot given a few weeks later is a "booster shot" is needed to boost antibody production to get the highest protection the vaccine has to offer.

WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN VACCINATED?

The vaccination provider should provide you with a vaccination card or printout detailing:

- The specific COVID-19 vaccine you received
- The date you received it
- The location where you received it

The vaccination provider should also provide a paper or electronic fact sheet on the specific COVID-19 vaccine that you were given to help you understand the risks and benefits of that vaccine, as well as the dosing schedule should you require a second booster shot based on the brand and type of vaccine received.

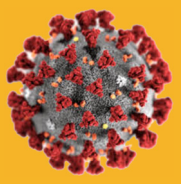
WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF TAKING COVID-19 VACCINE?

Side effects that have been reported with the COVID-19 vaccine include:[13]

- Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, nausea, feeling unwell, swollen lymph nodes, injection site redness, and swelling

While rare, the COVID-19 vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction that would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a vaccine dose. The CDC's guidelines to vaccine providers require that patients be monitored for 15-30 min for signs of an allergic reaction. Vaccination providers should have appropriate medications and equipment—such as epinephrine, antihistamines, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, and timing devices to check your pulse—at all COVID-19 vaccination sites.

[11] Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC
[12] Interim COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Guide (state.mn.us)
[13] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf



Common side effects may include:

- Pain and swelling in your arm at the site where you got the shot
- Fever, chills, tiredness, headache throughout the rest of your body

Signs of severe allergic reactions may include:[14]

- Difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, fast heartbeats, a rash all over your body, dizziness, and weakness

If you experience or think you may be experiencing a severe allergic reaction after you leave the immediate vaccination center, proceed immediately to an emergency room or dial 911.

HOW DO YOU REPORT THE ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE?

V-Safe is a new smartphone-based tool developed by the CDC that uses text messages and surveys to check in with vaccinated individuals for adverse events after a COVID-19 vaccination. This tool can also be used to provide second-dose reminders (if needed) and live telephone follow up from the CDC if you report an adverse event. Adverse events would include reporting that you missed work, were unable to complete normal daily activities, or had to seek care from a health provider.

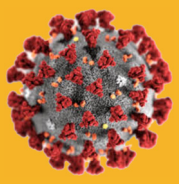
All healthcare facilities and professionals that will provide COVID-19 vaccines will be asked to provide hard copies of the V-Safe information sheet and encourage individuals on the importance of enrolling. Vaccination Program Providers also have a responsibility to report errors during vaccination, severe adverse events, and any cases involving hospitalization or death.

WILL COVID-19 VACCINES BE CONSIDERED MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Employers may seek to mandate vaccinations for their employees legally, but it may also be subject to the union's collective bargaining actions.

Vaccine recipients must be informed about the benefits and risks of any approved vaccine, and they have the option to accept or refuse immunization, as stated by the FDA.[15] The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)[16] states that employers are allowed to set "a requirement that an individual shall not pose a direct threat to individuals' health or safety in the workplace" — which includes some vaccines. There are exceptions for employees with disabilities or "sincerely held" religious beliefs and categories of workers protected by the ADA and Title VII. In those instances, employers must prove that an unvaccinated employee poses a “significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others" in the workplace and attempt to provide them with "reasonable accommodation."

[14] https://www.cvdvaccine-us.com/images/pdf/fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf
[15] https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained?
[16] https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/may-employers-mandate-covid-19-vaccines-79371/



I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VACCINATION. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you have a question about vaccines, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider. He or she can provide you with science-based advice about vaccination for you and your family, including the recommended vaccination schedule.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES?

- State Vaccination Plans – COVID-19 Resources for State Leaders (csg.org)
- COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf
- Fact-sheet-for-recipients-and-caregivers.pdf (cvdvaccine-us.com)
- Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC
- Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines (cdc.gov)
- Traditional and accelerated vaccine-development pipelines.