

Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19

January 2021



Fighting the pandemic has been hard, but now we have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19.



The vaccine is provided at no cost to you.

The federal government will cover the cost of your vaccine. You should not be charged or billed. Your provider should also not charge you for an office visit if you only go in to get the vaccine.



You will need to get two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines.

You will get two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, three to four weeks apart. You must get the second dose from the same manufacturer as the first dose. You should also plan to get both doses at the same vaccination site.



Both available vaccines are safe and effective.

The vaccines are very effective. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the vaccines for emergency use and found no serious safety concerns. Independent experts agree the vaccines are safe and effective.



People at highest risk will get the vaccine first.

Maine's supply of vaccine is very limited, so Maine has focused on saving the lives of those at greatest risk of illness or death from COVID-19 and protecting those directly engaged in the fight against the virus. As Maine gets more vaccine doses, more people will be able to be vaccinated. It will take some time, but over time everyone will be able to get vaccinated when we have enough doses. Visit www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites or call 211. (For interpreter services, say your language when the call is answered.)



You may feel side effects.

Like other routine vaccines, you may get a sore arm, fever, headaches, or fatigue after getting vaccinated. These are signs the vaccine is working.



Stay safe.

After you get the vaccine, wear your mask, stay six feet (two meters) apart, and avoid gatherings to protect those who have not yet been vaccinated.

What vaccines are currently available?

There are two vaccines available:

1. **Pfizer-BioNTech**
2. **Moderna**

Both have been approved by the FDA for emergency use. Other vaccines may be available soon.

Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

It is your choice to get the vaccine. If you decide to get it, you should tell your vaccine provider if you:

- Have a history of severe allergic reactions
- Have a fever
- Have a bleeding disorder or take blood thinners
- Are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
- Are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are lactating
- Have received another COVID-19 vaccine

You should not get the vaccine if you have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine or to any ingredient in the vaccine.

You must be at least 16 years old to get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 18 years old to get the Moderna vaccine.

What is in the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccines contain the active ingredient messenger RNA (mRNA), along with fat, salts, and sugars to protect the mRNA and help it work better in the body.

The vaccines do not contain live COVID virus, or other preservatives or substances. You cannot get COVID from getting the vaccine.

What happens after I get vaccinated?

You will need to wait 15 to 30 minutes before leaving the vaccine site so your vaccine provider can help you if you do have an allergic reaction or other side effects. While you wait, you can sign up for v-safe to report any side effects and get a reminder for your second dose: vsafe.cdc.gov.

It is common to have side effects one to three days after getting the vaccine. Common side effects are tiredness, muscle pain, pain in the arm where you got your shot, fever, headache, joint pain, chills, nausea, or vomiting. If your symptoms don't go away within 3-4 days, contact your doctor or clinic. You or your vaccine provider can also report side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS): vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html.

Call 911 if you have an allergic reaction after leaving the clinic. Signs of an allergic reaction include: difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over your body, dizziness, and weakness.

Make an appointment for your second dose. You'll need to come back in three to four weeks to get your second dose. It will take up to two weeks after your second dose for full protection.

After you get the vaccine, keep wearing your mask, stay six feet (two meters) apart, and avoid gatherings to protect those who are not yet vaccinated.

Many people will have to wait months to get vaccinated, depending on where they fall under Maine's vaccine strategy.

Questions?

Visit www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines for more information.

To request this document in another format, call (207) 287-5014. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Maine Relay) or email ADA-Civilrights.dhhs@maine.gov

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