

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: COVID-19 VACCINES



The following provides people living with cystic fibrosis and their families with the latest information and resources on COVID-19 vaccines. This information will be updated as the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation monitors developments to understand how these vaccinations may impact the CF community.

This is NOT medical advice. Care decisions should be based on recommendations — and the associated benefit-risk assessment of treatment options — from [your CF care team](#) and the goals and circumstances of the patients and families they serve.

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BEFORE GETTING VACCINATED

What vaccines have been approved for COVID-19?

Three vaccines have received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) emergency use authorization: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Janssen, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson (J&J). Learn more about how vaccines are evaluated for use by the FDA [here](#).

Can I choose which vaccine to get?

Because supplies of authorized vaccines continue to be limited, you will likely only have one option when a vaccine becomes available. The Foundation supports the use of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines for people living with CF and strongly encourages that people with CF discuss how to get vaccinated with their care teams.

When can I get vaccinated?

Because the supply of authorized vaccines is limited, they are being distributed in phases. The ACIP recommendations prioritize access to COVID-19 vaccines for people with high-risk medical conditions before the general public and recommend health care providers use clinical judgement in identifying patients whose individual risk factors warrant priority vaccine access. These recommendations support prioritized vaccine access for people with CF.

People with CF (ages 16 and older) should consult their doctor to determine if they meet the criteria for this high-risk group as defined by their state authorities. Vaccine distribution is determined by the CDC as well as state and local authorities. Learn more about the CDC's prioritization process [here](#).

How will I know if a vaccine is safe and effective for me?

To help you decide whether to get vaccinated, you can discuss the known benefits and risks with your doctor or care team. They can review the findings from clinical trials, including the potential side effects, and discuss your personal circumstances, such as your employment, school, or household situation.

Data from clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines being evaluated by the FDA indicate very high efficacy against symptomatic disease and were consistent across groups including those at high risk. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were shown in these trials to have over 90% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 infection. All three trials were ethnically diverse. The percentages of participants who were Black ranged from 10% to 13%, and the percentage of Hispanic participants ranged from 13% to 28%. All trials include data on people at high risk for severe illness, such as those with chronic but stable medical conditions, like high blood pressure, pulmonary disease, and diabetes. Based on these findings, there is no evidence to suggest that people with CF would respond differently from those included in the clinical trials.

Following the FDA authorization of a vaccine, the safety and efficacy are reviewed by an independent CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). This committee includes vaccine experts who use a rigorous method designed to protect the health and safety of the public. Learn more about this process further down this page under "[What is the review and approval process for vaccines in the United States?](#)"

I have CF. Can family members in my household also get vaccinated to keep me safe?

The limited supply of vaccines will be reserved for people who are at greatest risk for severe COVID-19 illness. If members of your household meet the criteria due to their job, age, or health condition, they may receive priority access for the vaccine. Others will need to wait until more doses are available.

Until I get vaccinated, how can I stay safe?

There are many things you can do to protect your health and that of your household until a vaccine is available and, more importantly, until infection rates are reduced. Everyone — even those who have been vaccinated — should continue doing what they can to protect their health and the health of everyone around them. Learn more about prevention and safety [here](#).

How much will a vaccine cost?

Most people will be able to get a vaccine without paying out of pocket. However, in certain circumstances, you may be charged by your doctor or health care provider for giving you the shots (the cost of the vaccine itself is covered by the U.S. government). If you have questions about whether getting a COVID-19 vaccine is covered by your health insurance or about cost-sharing, call Compass at 844-COMPASS (844-266-7277).

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN GETTING VACCINATED

How many shots will it take for me to be fully vaccinated?

Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's authorized vaccines require two shots. Timing between the shots does vary and should be reviewed with your doctor. It is important that you receive both shots of the same vaccine to fully benefit from the protection that the vaccine provides. The JANSSEN vaccine requires only one shot for a person to be fully vaccinated.

What are the side effects?

Although side effects from the different vaccines may vary, those that have been commonly reported include pain where the shot is injected, fatigue, muscle aches, chills, and fever. These side effects usually go away within a few days and are a sign that your immune system is working. Talk to your doctor about what side effects you can expect after being vaccinated. Vaccine manufacturers and public health officials will continue to monitor side effects as the vaccines are given to the wider population. Severe allergic reactions to both vaccines are rare. However, if you have had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine or injection in the past, ask your doctor if you should get vaccinated and what you can expect, including when to contact your care team or seek medical attention should you experience a bad reaction.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTERWARDS

How long will I be protected after I am vaccinated?

More data are needed to determine how long the vaccine provides protection from SARS-CoV-2. The vaccine manufacturers and public health officials will continue to monitor vaccine recipients for several months to years following FDA approval. Over time, we will gain a better understanding of long-term immunity.

Do I still have to mask, wash my hands and physical distance after I get vaccinated?

Yes, until infection rates remain low, everyone — even those who have been vaccinated — should continue doing what they can to protect their health and the health of everyone around them. People who have been vaccinated can still have the virus that causes COVID-19 and infect others, even if they themselves are not ill. Enough of the population will need to be vaccinated in order for us to learn how well the vaccines provide long-term protection under real-life conditions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For people with CF and their Families:

[CF and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#): A section on [cff.org](#) where all COVID-19-related resources — including additional questions and answers about vaccines and how to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19 in everyday life for people with CF and their families — can be found in one place.

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