

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE



Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect yourself and your family – and an important tool in the fight against the COVID-19 virus. We hope this information helps answer your questions so you can make an informed decision. Please visit [ExcellusBCBS.com/covid19](https://www.ExcellusBCBS.com/covid19) for more information, tips and support.

WHEN CAN I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

There are rapid changes with vaccine availability and eligibility in New York State. To check your eligibility and find locations where you can schedule an appointment:

- Visit the New York State of Health’s website at [am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov](https://www.am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov)
- Call the New York State Vaccination Hotline at **1.833.NYS.4VAX (1.833.697.4829)**
- **Please call 211** if you need help scheduling an appointment or don’t have access to the internet

WHERE CAN I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

- The COVID-19 vaccine will be available at pharmacies, hospitals, through the local health departments and State-run sites.
- You can get the vaccine from any provider that offers it, even if the provider does not participate in your health plan’s network.
 - Visit [am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov](https://www.am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov) to find out where vaccines are available.
 - If you are looking for appointments with pharmacies, doctors’ offices or local health departments, please check their website or contact them directly.

WHY SHOULD I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

COVID-19 is very serious and can cause severe medical complications that lead to death in some people. The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is by getting the vaccine

when it is available to you and taking other precautions, including practicing social distancing, continuing to wear a mask and washing your hands often and thoroughly.

The vaccines have been developed and tested through clinical trials with an emphasis on safety and efficacy. The FDA has reviewed these trial results and has conducted its own analysis before authorizing these products. Many people were recruited for the trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions.

WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE COVER THE VACCINE? WILL THERE BE A COST TO ME?

Vaccines will be provided at no cost to patients. The vaccine is being paid for by the federal government and health insurers cover the health provider costs for administering the vaccine.

WILL I NEED A PRESCRIPTION FOR THE VACCINE?

A prescription is not required for the vaccine, but an appointment and your ID is required to get vaccinated.

IF I ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED?

Yes, reinfection is still possible. We don’t know how long someone is protected after getting COVID-19. Anyone currently infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation.

CAN A COVID-19 VACCINE GIVE ME COVID-19?

No. The COVID-19 vaccines being used in the U.S. don't use the live virus that causes COVID-19 and cannot make you sick from the virus. Some people may experience some mild side effects after receiving the vaccine, but this **does NOT mean you are sick with COVID-19**. These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection against the virus.

HOW WILL I GET MY SECOND DOSE OF THE VACCINE?

Ask at the time of your first shot when you need to return for your second shot and how to make the appointment. The timing between your first and second shot depends on which vaccine you receive and it's important you get both shots within the timelines suggested. The vaccines that are currently available require two shots, but some vaccines under FDA review require only one shot.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER GETTING THE COVID-19 VACCINE

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may feel like flu and may even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Common side effects on the arm where you got the shot:

- Pain
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:

- Fever
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Headache

HELPFUL TIPS

If you have pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot:

- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area.
- Use or exercise your arm.

To reduce discomfort from fever:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress lightly.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours.
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days.

REMEMBER

Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

With most COVID-19 vaccines, you will need two shots in order for them to work. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.

It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require two shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.

It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.

Source: cdc.gov