

# COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs

## Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

To keep our elders and other Tribal members safe from COVID-19, we need to use all the tools we have at our disposal. Vaccines are one of the most effective ways to protect our health, and the health of our communities. Vaccines help your body to build immunity against COVID-19. Reach out to your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider to find out when and where you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## What does the COVID-19 vaccine do?

The COVID-19 vaccine can help keep you from getting sick! COVID-19 can cause severe illness or even death. Each COVID-19 vaccine that is available in the US is effective at preventing COVID-19. If you do become sick after you are vaccinated, the COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you from more serious illness. All three vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) have been either authorized or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in adults. Additionally, the Pfizer vaccine has been authorized for use in children as young as 6 months old.

## Will it cost me money to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

No! The COVID-19 vaccine will be provided to you free of charge. No one should ever charge you for a COVID-19 vaccine. If they do, you can bet it's a scam.

## Will the COVID-19 Vaccine Give me COVID-19?

No! COVID-19 vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID-19, and you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

## Should I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?

Yes! Even if you've already had COVID-19, it's possible that you could still get sick again. We still don't know how long you are protected from getting sick again after having COVID-19, but we do know that vaccination is our best protection against re-infection.

## What can I do after I get my COVID-19 vaccine?

Once you're fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your 2nd Pfizer or Moderna dose, or 2 weeks after getting the J&J vaccine), you're able to resume many activities that you were able to do before the pandemic started. It is recommended to continue to wear a mask indoors in public places to reduce the risk of being infected or possibly spreading it to others. However, it is important to follow whatever guidelines or recommendations put in place by your local, State, or Tribal health department, and those of any place you may visit.



### **Will I have side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, you may have some side effects. That could include pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where you got your shot, or even tiredness, headaches, muscle pain, chill, and a fever. These are normal signs of your body building up immunity to COVID-19! If your side effects last for more than a few days, or if any of the side effects are concerning to you, reach out to your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider.

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**

Yes! All COVID-19 vaccines that are approved or authorized for use in the US were tested in clinical studies involving thousands of people, including American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). These studies were done to test the safety and efficiency of the vaccines, and to make sure that each vaccine meets safety standards and protects everyone of all ages, races, genders, and ethnicities. All COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the US meet the FDA's firm scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and quality that are needed to support emergency use authorization (EUA). Approved COVID-19 vaccines meet the same safety standards as all other vaccines used in the US.

### **What if I'm allergic to one of the ingredients in the vaccine?**

If you had an allergic reaction, whether it was immediate, severe, or even if it was not severe, to any of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) you should not get either of those vaccines. If you had an allergic reaction to any ingredient in the J&J vaccine, you should not get that vaccine. However, if you had an allergic reaction to an ingredient in one type of COVID-19 vaccine, you may still be able to get a different type of COVID-19 vaccine. If you aren't able to get the second dose of an mRNA vaccine because you had an allergic reaction to the first dose, ask your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider if you should get a different type of COVID-19 vaccine. If you've ever had an allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable medicines, talk to your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider.

### **Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I'm pregnant?**

Yes! COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant, or may become pregnant in the future. Pregnant and recently pregnant people have an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness compared to those who aren't pregnant. There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility issues in men or women. Additionally, there is currently no evidence showing that the COVID-19 vaccine causes problems with becoming pregnant.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?**

No! Just like any other vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine cannot affect your DNA in any way.

### **Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition like diabetes?**

Yes, it is safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have an underlying medical condition. People with conditions like diabetes, obesity, heart disease, or lung disease are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. That's why it's especially important that anyone with one of these conditions get their COVID-19 vaccine. Those who have weakened immune systems may not get as much protection from the COVID-19 vaccine as those with a functioning immune system. It is recommended that people who have moderate-to-severely compromised immune systems receive a third dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days (4 weeks) after their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. If you have an underlying medical condition, or if you're unsure if you have a weakened immune system, talk to your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider to learn what your next steps should be.





### **Can I decorate or laminate my COVID-19 vaccination card?**

It is advised not to alter your COVID-19 vaccine card in any way, which could include adding Tribal names or logos. Although there is likely good intent behind doing so, an altered COVID-19 vaccination card may not be recognized as ample proof of vaccination to allow for entry into other countries. To ensure that vaccination cards will be accepted as valid proof of vaccination, it is recommended that Tribes, Tribal-serving organization, and Tribal healthcare providers use and distribute the unaltered HHS/CDC COVID-19 vaccination card. If you want to decorate your vaccination card, try a decorative holder or lanyard instead!

### **Can children get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes! Children ages 6 months and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Children ages 6 months and older get a smaller dose of the vaccine compared to adults. However, just like the adult vaccine, the pediatric vaccine is given as a two-dose primary series, three weeks apart. Talk to your child's doctor or Tribal healthcare provider to see if they offer COVID-19 vaccination, or if you have any questions.

