



Frequently Asked Questions for Members

Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved COVID-19 vaccines may help protect you and those you love from getting the disease.

They are as safe and effective as possible at preventing COVID-19

Vaccines

1. What COVID-19 vaccines are available?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the following vaccines:

- Pfizer Inc./BioNTech for individuals 12 years of age and older
- Moderna for individuals 18 years of age and older.
- Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines will require two doses -- the initial dose and a repeat vaccination three or four weeks later.
- A single dose vaccine from Johnson & Johnson was also approved for individuals 18 years of age and older.

As of April 12, 2021 -- more than 6.8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine have been administered in the U.S. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and FDA have reviewed the data involving six U.S. reported cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. These adverse events appear to be extremely rare.

2. Why did the pause end for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended the distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine resume on April 23, 2021. The pause gave experts time to carefully review all available data and conduct a risk-benefit analysis for the use of this vaccine. This review of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine showed that the vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks.

Women younger than 50 years-old should be aware of the rare risk of blood clots with low platelets after vaccination. Other COVID-19 vaccines are available where this risk has not been seen. If you have already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, please contact your primary care physician (PCP) with any questions.

3. Who is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccines and when?

The Virginia Department of Health has adopted the recommendation from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to distribute the vaccine in phases:

- Phase 1a will include high-risk healthcare personnel and staff (emergency department staff, COVID-19 patient units, EMS), and residents of long-term care facilities (nursing homes).
- Phase 1b will include frontline essential workers, people with medical issues that put them at high-risk for COVID-19, and people 65 years and older.
- Phase 1c will include other essential workers.

Later phases will include the remaining general population.

Visit vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine to learn more about when you will be eligible to receive the vaccine based on your age, location, occupation, and health condition. Visit cdc.gov to learn more about COVID-19.

4. What should I know about these vaccines?

You will not get COVID-19 from a vaccine. None of the vaccines authorized by the FDA contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. These vaccines were developed using new vaccine technology (mRNA), which will teach our own immune system to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. The FDA makes sure all vaccines go through an extensive process to confirm levels of safety. The FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines went through this process. The FDA continues to review clinical data about the vaccines.

5. How do these vaccines work?

Both the Pfizer Inc./BioNTech and Moderna vaccines deliver genetic material (mRNA) that tells the body how to produce the coronavirus spike protein. The immune system reacts to the spike protein and builds a defense against it.

6. Do I still need to practice social distancing, wear a mask and wash my hands after getting a vaccine?

It is still unknown if you can transmit the COVID-19 virus to others after receiving the vaccine. This is why you must still follow all safety guidelines after vaccination and continue to wear a mask. Learn more <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

7. When will I be immune from COVID-19?

Immunity, which means up to 95% effectiveness, will be achieved between six to eight weeks after you receive the first dose, but you must also receive the second dose to achieve full immunity. This is still a very fluid issue and medical professionals are learning more about the protections each day.

8. What are the common side effects from the vaccines?

There is a remote possibility that the vaccines could cause a severe allergic reaction. Most likely this would occur within an hour of receiving the vaccine.

Mild reactions to the vaccines have been reported over the first few days after receiving the vaccine. These reactions could include mild muscle pain at the injection site, a low-grade fever, and or a headache. Long-term side effects from vaccines are rare. The clinical trials will follow vaccine participants for two years, which will provide more information in the future.

9. What should I do if I do not feel well?

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot, apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area and exercise your arm. If you have persistent pain or other discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. In most cases, pain or swelling from where you got the shot will not last more than a few days after a COVID-19 vaccine dose. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider if your side effects are worrying you or if they last more than a few days.

10. Will Virginia Premier cover the cost of getting the vaccines?

All COVID-19 vaccines will be free for members. There is a significant effort to ensure the COVID-19 vaccine is distributed equitably throughout all communities and those at the highest risk will have the opportunity to receive a vaccine.

COVID-19 Symptoms and Testing

1. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

According to the CDC, COVID-19 is caused by the novel coronavirus. COVID-19 symptoms may appear between two and 14 days after exposure to the virus.

People with the symptoms below or combinations of these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- fever or chills
- new loss of taste or smell
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- congestion or runny nose
- fatigue
- nausea or vomiting
- muscle or body aches
- diarrhea
- headache

2. What should I do if I think I or a family member is infected?

If you are experiencing symptoms similar to a common cold or flu, and think you have been exposed to COVID-19, please contact your primary care physician to get tested.

Can't reach your doctor? Call our 24/7 Nurse Line 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at the number on your ID card.

3. What will Virginia Premier cover during the COVID- 19 Public Health Emergency?

Virginia Premier is waiving member cost share on the following through **June 30, 2021**:

- all telehealth visits, including telephone only, with any in-network care provider
- any necessary in-network or emergent out-of-network diagnostic testing and/or treatment of COVID-19.

Meaning, you should not receive a bill for these services.

Pre-authorization requirements for out-of-network services will be waived as appropriate for Medicaid members. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) has eliminated copayments for all Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) members. More information can be found on the Cover Virginia website at coverva.org.

End dates may vary for Medicaid and Medicare members.