

## Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Vaccine

*This brief overview for employees answers some commonly asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.*

**Q:** *How effective is the vaccine against COVID-19?*

**A:** Vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration for emergency use in the U.S. (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen)) have been shown to be safe and highly effective at preventing moderate to severe illness, preventing hospitalizations and death from COVID-19 and its variants.

**Q:** *Can the vaccine cause COVID-19?*

**A:** Vaccines do not contain a live virus and cannot cause a COVID-19 infection.

**Q:** *What are the most common vaccination side effects?*

**A:** Common vaccine side effects include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, chills, fever and nausea. These are normal reactions that will typically go away in 1-2 days.

**Q:** *How often do serious adverse effects occur after vaccination?*

**A:** Among more than 346 million doses administered in the U.S. by Aug. 1, 2021, reports of serious or life-threatening reactions to vaccination are rare. Refer to [Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for related data.

**Q:** *Does vaccination prevent transmission of the virus to others?*

**A:** Vaccination significantly reduces transmission risk. However, vaccines do not provide 100 percent protection. It's possible, though statistically unlikely, for breakthrough infections to occur in fully vaccinated people. A vaccinated person with COVID-19 may be asymptomatic and spread the virus to others without realizing it. The Delta variant responsible for summer 2021 outbreaks in the U.S. is even more contagious than the original strain. That's why it's important to get vaccinated, avoid crowds, wear a mask indoors and practice social distancing when in public places. You can view the vaccination tracker for your region or state on Johns Hopkins University's [Coronavirus Resource Center website](#).

**Q:** *Is vaccination recommended for those who have had COVID-19 and recovered from it?*

**A:** Yes. It has not been determined how long natural immunity lasts after being infected. Note: If you were treated for COVID with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting vaccinated. Check with your doctor first.

**Q:** *If I'm fully vaccinated, will I need to get a booster shot?*

**A:** It has not yet been determined when healthy, fully vaccinated Americans will be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine booster. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is reviewing options, including boosters for immune-compromised people with lower resistance to infection, and will be making recommendations. It's advisable to monitor CDC updates.

**Q:** *How do COVID-19 vaccines work?*

**A:** COVID-19 vaccines work by teaching immune cells how to make copycat spike proteins on the surface of the virus. In response, the immune system produces antibodies and prepares immune cells to resist infection. The mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna contain genetic material that prompts cells to make copies of the spike protein. The J&J/Janssen is a viral vector (or vehicle) vaccine that uses a harmless virus to carry genetic material to cells.