

COVID-19 Vaccines

Frequently Asked Questions

What is happening with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

On Tuesday, April 13th the CDC and FDA issued a statement regarding the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. They are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution after the report of 6 cases of a rare kind of blood clot that appears to affect women of reproductive age.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet to discuss the cases and the FDA has an investigation underway. Until that process is complete, all Premise Health wellness centers will pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until further notice.

I already received the Johnson and Johnson (J&J) vaccine, what do I need to do?

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine (also known as the Janssen vaccine) within the last three weeks, while the risk is low, you should be on the lookout and seek medical attention if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Severe headache
- Abdominal pain
- Leg pain
- Shortness of breath

These are not the same as symptoms associated with the side effects of the

vaccine, which typically occur on days 1-3 post vaccination.

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than 1 month ago, there is minimal to no risk of this adverse reaction occurring, and you do not need to take any further actions.

I had the vaccine, but it wasn't J&J. Should I be concerned?

While mRNA vaccines seem new, if you received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, you do not need to be concerned and there is nothing you need to do at this time.

If I have an upcoming vaccine appointment scheduled, what should I do?

If you have an upcoming COVID-19 vaccine appointment, your appointment may be cancelled or rescheduled if you are scheduled to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. When available, you may be vaccinated with one of the other two vaccines available (currently Pfizer and Moderna, both a 2-dose series). Blood clotting and low platelets are not seen with the mRNA vaccines, so if you have an appointment for either of those vaccines, plan to keep those appointments.

Can I get the vaccine at my wellness center?

Premise Health is actively vaccinating at many of our centers, serving members who

are “in-phase” in their states. As more vaccine becomes available, Premise plans to procure and administer the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with federal, state and manufacturer guidelines.

Regardless of when the COVID-19 vaccine is available at your wellness center, our staff will still act as a valuable resource for guidance on the vaccine, as well as continued COVID-19 testing and support. Please visit our COVID-19 resource page at Members.PremiseHealth.com/Covid19 for more information and ways we can support you through the pandemic.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Yes. Although the authorizations were prioritized to expedite getting vaccines to the public, the standard safety trials and procedures were followed to ensure safety and effectiveness. The FDA follows rigorous standards and will only give emergency use authorization (EUA) if the vaccine candidates meet their qualifications.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been put on hold, out of an abundance of caution, until further investigation of the reported rare side effect is complete.

I heard mRNA vaccines are new and haven't been fully tested. Are they safe?

While mRNA vaccines seem new, researchers have been studying them for decades. They were a favorable choice for the COVID-19 vaccine because they can be created in a lab using readily available materials, which means they can be developed faster than more traditional methods of making vaccines. Basically, rather than triggering an immune response

with a weakened or inactive virus, the mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response and helps produce antibodies against the SARS-CoV-2 virus to protect us from future infection.

Can any of the currently available vaccines change my DNA?

No, your DNA is inside your cells. The vaccine components never enter your cells' DNA and do not affect your genetic code.

Were clinical trials only done on young, healthy people?

No. All the vaccines available under the emergency use authorization (EUA) in the U.S. were tested in a diverse group of adults spanning different races, ethnicities and ages. There were no significant safety concerns identified in these or any other groups.

What are the potential side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some participants in the clinical trials reported temporary, mild to moderate side effects after receiving their vaccine. The side effects were fairly similar to that of the flu vaccine and included pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, fever and aching muscles and joints for a day or two. Serious side effects are very rare, but typically if someone is going to have an allergic reaction to a vaccine it will likely occur in people who have had severe reactions in the past. If you have had an anaphylaxis reaction to a vaccine previously, you may have some additional screening/monitoring during the vaccination visit.

In general, side effects to the vaccines are temporary, and mild to moderate side effects are preferable to the alternative of getting COVID-19, so they should not deter you from receiving the vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do – working and building up protection to disease.

What about the allergic reactions caused by the COVID-19 vaccine?

Of the tens of thousands of vaccine trial participants, there have been very few serious side effects reported. Some individuals have had allergic reactions to the vaccine, but it is extremely rare. As a precaution, you will be asked about any history of severe, life threatening allergic reactions prior to being vaccinated. Everyone who receives the vaccine will be required to wait 15 minutes after vaccination for observation and 30 minutes if you have a history of anaphylaxis to ensure you do not have an unexpected, adverse reaction to the vaccine.

If you have a history of severe allergic reactions, and particularly to vaccines, ask your provider for further guidance on whether you should get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I choose which vaccine I get?

You likely will not be able to choose the vaccine you receive. It will depend on your local area and what is available there, based on what your state health department can order and distribute. It may also depend on what your local hospital or wellness center can accommodate.

It is important to know that all the vaccines currently available in the U.S. are highly effective, safe and prevent hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

Now that there is a single dose vaccine, do I need to keep my appointment for a second dose?

Yes, because the 1-dose and 2-dose vaccines are different. If you started the 2-dose series, your antibody development and protection against the virus is based on having two doses of the vaccine.

Will I have to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine will be provided free of charge in the United States. However, providers can charge a fee for administering the shot to you. Your insurance will likely cover this added fee and there are public funds to cover fees for those without insurance, so cost should not be a barrier to getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will there be enough supply of the vaccine for everyone?

The federal government is working with vaccine manufacturers to ensure adequate supply. High-risk populations will receive the vaccine first, followed by the general public. It is anticipated that all eligible persons will have the vaccine made available to them by April 19, 2021.

Should everyone get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Studies on COVID-19 vaccine safety in children are still ongoing, so the CDC has not recommended those under the age of 16 get the vaccine at this time. Also, pregnant women and those who are

immunocompromised can get the vaccine but are encouraged to discuss any questions they may have with their healthcare provider first.

As of now, experts recommend that all other parts of the population should get the COVID-19 vaccine when it's made available, to help slow the spread and ultimately end the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are unsure, talk with your healthcare provider.

If I've already had COVID-19, do I need to get the vaccine?

Yes, people who have had COVID-19 already are eligible to receive the vaccine and should do so. If you currently have COVID-19, you should wait until the end of your isolation period before you get your vaccine.

If I get the COVID-19 vaccine, can I still get the virus?

Yes, there is a small chance you could still get COVID-19 after receiving the vaccine because even though the authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective no vaccine is 100% effective. So, even though you could potentially still get the virus, you're much less likely to get it if you've had the vaccine.

It's also important to note that the vaccine may prevent severe illness and long-term symptoms of COVID-19 if you get it. This is important, because even young survivors who were physically fit prior to getting COVID-19 have reported lingering symptoms months after infection. This is called post-acute COVID-19 syndrome (PACS for short). PACS symptoms can include fatigue, difficulty breathing, cough,

joint pain, chest pain, cognitive impairment, depression, muscle pain, headache, fever and palpitations. More serious complications of COVID-19 can include heart disease, acute kidney injury, rash, hair loss, smell and taste dysfunction, sleep dysregulation, depression, anxiety and changes in mood.

Those who get the COVID-19 vaccine should still take other protections such as wearing a mask, social distancing, hand washing and more.

Can I stop wearing my mask and social distancing if I get the vaccine?

In certain situations, possibly! The CDC has published guidelines for how vaccinated people can interact with other vaccinated people indoors and without masks, as well as how vaccinated people can safely spend time with non-vaccinated people who are not high risk for severe disease. These guidelines are not for healthcare or work settings and may be a bit confusing. If you are unsure, you should discuss with your healthcare provider or review the information on the [CDC guidelines](#).

In all other settings, health experts say that they will continue to advise wearing masks and social distancing until it is safe to resume pre-pandemic conditions. We need all the tools available to stop the spread, which includes the vaccine and the protection tactics recommended by top health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC). The best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19 will be getting vaccinated, while continuing to follow CDC guidelines

like wearing a mask, staying 6 feet away from others, washing your hands often, etc.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, reach out to your healthcare provider or check out: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/>