

COVID-19 Vaccines

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine at my wellness center?

Premise Health is actively vaccinating at many of our centers where possible. Now that everyone over the age of 16 can get vaccinated, we plan to continue to obtain and administer the COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with federal, state and manufacturer guidelines. You should reach out to your local wellness center directly to see if it's available and to schedule an appointment.

Regardless of if/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 FDA and CDC are also continuing to monitor the authorized vaccines as they're being administered to the public to ensure continued safety and efficacy.

What about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine went through the clinical trials necessary to deem its safety and efficacy. It was issued on February 27, 2021 for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the FDA to prevent COVID-19 in those 18 and older.

On Tuesday, April 13, 2021 the CDC and FDA issued a statement regarding the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine (also known as the Janssen vaccine). By that time, over seven million Johnson & Johnson vaccines had been administered. Of the seven million, fifteen individuals, mostly women between the ages of 18-48, developed a rare blood clotting disorder within 1-3 weeks of receiving the vaccine. The CDC and FDA recommended a pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine out of an abundance of caution.

On Friday, April 23rd, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) determined that the vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks and voted to lift the pause of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19

vaccine. The FDA and CDC have expressed confidence that this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19 and have issued a joint statement that administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine may resume, effective immediately.

The pause of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine shows that the regulatory standards are in place to continue monitoring the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines and should not deter you from being vaccinated.

[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 in the clinical trials.

[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 the flu vaccine and included pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, fever and aching muscles and joints for a day or two.

As noted previously, there has also been a very rare side effect associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Some individuals, mostly women between the ages of 18-48, who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine developed a rare blood clotting disorder within 1-3 weeks of receiving the vaccine. Although this side effect is extremely rare, the CDC and FDA paused administration of this vaccine, completed a thorough investigation and ultimately determined that it was safe to resume administering it as of April 23, 2021. The CDC has also provided healthcare providers and vaccine recipients, or their caregivers, with information about what to look for in the rare event that a person develops this adverse reaction.

In general, side effects to the vaccines are temporary and mild to moderate in nature. These 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.

If I am a woman between the ages of 18-48, and already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, should I be concerned?

If you were given the Johnson & Johnson vaccine over three weeks ago, there is minimal to no risk of developing a blood clot.

For those who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the last three weeks, your risk of developing a blood clot is still very low and that risk will continue to decrease over time. In the rare event that you develop any of the following symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Leg swelling
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection

Keep in mind that these symptoms are not the same as the more common side effects of all the authorized COVID-19 vaccines noted previously, which typically begin 1-3 days after vaccination and do not pose any risk for blood clotting or low platelets.

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, wellness center or pharmacy 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.

It's also significant to note that blood clotting and low platelets are very rare side effects of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but women under the age of 50 especially, should be aware of the rare risk after vaccination and know that other COVID-19 vaccines are available. This rare side effect is not a side effect of the mRNA vaccines, from Pfizer and Moderna.

Do I really need to get the second dose of my vaccine, since I'm already mostly protected with my first shot?

Yes, because your antibody development and protection against the virus is based on having two doses of the vaccine. For full protection, you need your second dose and should get it even if you had side effects after the first shot (unless your provider tells you otherwise).

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, that is only a 1-dose vaccine and you are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after you receive it.

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 of the vaccine. The initial phased approach of administering the vaccine was meant to help with any supply and demand issues and to get the highest-risk populations vaccinated first. As of April 19, 2021, everyone that is 16 years of age or older is now eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine and you may start seeing more available.

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 protect themselves and others by wearing a mask, social distancing, hand washing, etc. until we have reached a safe level of herd immunity.

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

In certain situations, yes! 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 provided in 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/>