What New Yorkers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccines save lives. When you get vaccinated, you are helping to protect yourself from COVID-19 and making your community safer. New York City (NYC) is committed to keeping everyone safe and healthy. This includes making sure that vaccine access is fair and equitable and providing people with the information they need to make informed decisions about vaccination.

Do the vaccines work?

- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were shown to be very effective at protecting people from severe COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death.
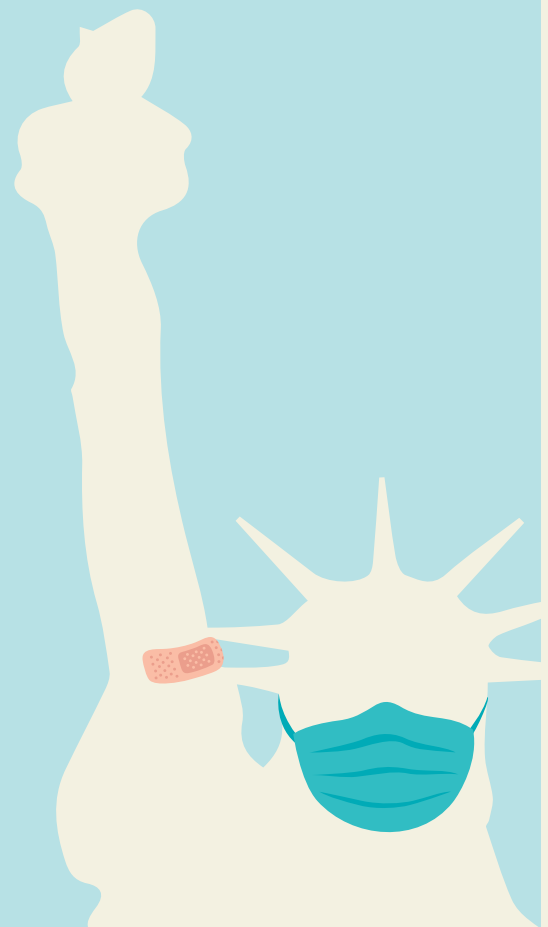
Are the vaccines safe?

- **Yes. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines.** The vaccines do not contain the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccines teach your body's immune system how to fight the virus, so it knows how to do so if you are exposed to COVID-19.
- The vaccines have gone through large clinical studies involving tens of thousands of people of various ages, races and ethnicities. The evidence from those studies was closely reviewed by the FDA and independent organizations.

How were the vaccines developed so quickly?

- COVID-19 vaccine development involved unprecedented resources. Billions of dollars were spent and scientists from around the world have been working nonstop.
- Scientists built on decades of research from other vaccines, including research on vaccines for other coronaviruses.

Are there side effects from the vaccines?

- Yes, most people have some side effects. Common side effects include soreness in the arm where you got the shot, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever.
- If you have any questions or concerns, call **311** or talk to your health care provider.
- Side effects can be unpleasant, but they are usually not a health concern and go away within 24 to 48 hours. In contrast, COVID-19 is a significant health concern and can lead to long-term health complications, hospitalization and death.

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Who can get a vaccine and how much will it cost?

- All New Yorkers age 16 and older are eligible for vaccination. People who live outside of the state but who work or study in New York are also eligible to get vaccinated. People who are eligible based on employment include both paid and unpaid workers. For more information, visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccine**.

- The vaccines are provided at no cost. If you have insurance, it may be billed but you will not be charged a copay or other fee.

- You do not need to share your immigration status to be vaccinated. Getting vaccinated will not make you a "public charge" or affect your immigration status.

Is my confidentiality protected?

- When you receive the vaccine, your privacy will be protected. There are strict laws in place to ensure confidentiality of your personal information.

Where can I get a vaccine?

- Check with your health care provider to see if they are offering vaccinations.

- Visit **nyc.gov/vaccinefinder** to find a site and make an appointment. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to make an appointment at NYC-run sites.

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

- Yes, since it is possible to get COVID-19 again, you should get vaccinated. The vaccines are safe and may boost the protection your body has already built up.

When I get vaccinated, can I stop physical distancing and wearing a face covering?

- No. We need to be cautious until more people are vaccinated and until there has been more time for us to better understand the impact of the vaccines on the spread of COVID-19. Everyone must continue to practice key prevention measures even after being vaccinated:

  - Stay home if you are sick.
  - Maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.
  - Wear a face covering (snugly over your mouth and nose) when outside your home.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

It is understandable that some people may be unsure about getting vaccinated or may have additional questions. To learn more, talk to your health care provider, call **311**, or visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccine**.

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