

COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Guide

We all want to protect our children in any way we can. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is a choice that is yours to make, for you and your family. We understand you may have questions about vaccine options, and we're here to help you with the information you need to make that important decision so you can protect your children.

COVID-19 is a dangerous disease that can spread very quickly among our communities and our families and can cause significant health risks for our children and the most vulnerable among us. Choosing to get vaccinated is the safest and most effective thing we can do to protect our children and keep them healthy. If you need more resources to help you make an informed, confident decision, visit archildrens.org/COVIDvaccine.

Frequently Asked Questions

What vaccines are currently available in the United States? Are they effective?

Vaccine	How many doses?	Effectiveness in real world situations?
Pfizer (mRNA)	2 doses, given 3 weeks apart	Both mRNA vaccines are similarly effective: >85% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infection >96% effective in preventing hospitalization from COVID-19 >65% effective in preventing asymptomatic infection
Moderna (mRNA)	2 doses, given 4 weeks apart	
Johnson & Johnson/Janssen (viral vector)	1 dose	77% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infection

The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for use in people over 18 years of age in the United States. The Pfizer mRNA vaccine is also authorized for use in children 12 years of age and older. These vaccines do not alter your DNA.

Do the vaccines work against the COVID-19 variants of concern, like the Delta variant?

All COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States are highly effective in preventing severe illness and hospitalizations due to COVID-19, including the Delta variant.

How do we know if a COVID-19 vaccine is safe?

To make sure they are safe and effective, the vaccines go through intense clinical trials and safety reviews before they're approved. Thousands of people from various age groups, racial backgrounds and ethnicities from all over the nation participated in vaccine trials before the vaccines went through even more scrutiny from experts at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In real world use, over many months, more than 160 million people have been vaccinated in the United States and it has proven to be just as safe and effective as we saw in clinical trials.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for pregnant or breastfeeding individuals? Will the vaccine impact future fertility?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said pregnant and breastfeeding women who are at high risk of exposure do qualify to receive the vaccine if they choose.

While pregnant or breastfeeding women were not included in the clinical trials, health officials have not detected safety concerns among thousands of pregnant women who have received a COVID-19 vaccine or among their babies.

There is no evidence of any impact on future fertility or on pregnancy. In fact, many women who chose to get vaccinated have gotten pregnant and given birth since getting vaccinated. In addition, their babies were born with the antibodies required to protect themselves from COVID-19.

There is no evidence that vaccines would impact fertility, a developing baby or breastmilk. Both the [Society for Maternal and Fetal Medicine](#) and the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#) recommend pregnant and breastfeeding women be allowed to get the vaccine. Additionally, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) released news stating preliminary data shows no safety concerns for pregnant women receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Any pregnant person, or person considering pregnancy or breastfeeding should talk to their doctor about possible individual risk factors or concerns.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

The CDC recommends that everyone 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination. At Arkansas Children's, we are encouraging all eligible individuals to get the vaccine as soon as possible. The Pfizer clinical trials have had participants as young as 12, and vaccines are only approved for individuals 12 years of age or older. The Moderna vaccine is only currently approved for individuals 18 years of age and older. Future studies will help us determine the effects of vaccines in younger children.



How many shots of COVID-19 vaccine will I need?

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines need two shots to be effective, while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires one. If your first shot was from Pfizer, your second shot must be from Pfizer. The same is true if you received the Moderna vaccine as your first shot. Your second shot must be from Moderna. Keep your vaccine card or take a photo of it so you remember which one you received.

Completing your vaccine series is critical. Data from the United Kingdom shows that the Pfizer mRNA vaccine is only 33% effective after one dose, but 88% effective after 2 doses.

How many days apart will the two vaccine shots need to be?

The number of days between the doses will depend on which initial vaccine you got. Please refer to the table above for specific details. You will need to get your second dose within 3-4 weeks. When you get vaccinated, you will be given a card that tells you which vaccine you got and when to return. Be sure to keep this card, and take a photo of the card for your records.

What are the side effects to the COVID-19 vaccines?

Like other routine vaccinations, COVID-19 vaccines may cause short-term pain at the injection site. After the second dose, there may be more pain and systemic effects like fever, fatigue and muscle aches. These side effects are usually gone in a day or two. There are no concerns about long-term side effects or how the vaccine would impact people later in life. If you have concerns, we encourage you to talk to your care provider or contact Arkansas Children's directly.

The most common side effects of any COVID-19 vaccine are arm pain, fatigue, fever and body aches. These side effects are brief and typically get better without any intervention. These side effects come from the work your immune system is doing to "learn" from the vaccine so it can fight the real virus in the future. It does not mean that you are infected with COVID-19 and the vaccines do not contain live virus.

A few days after receiving the second dose of an mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine, some children and young adults have developed mild inflammation of their heart, called myocarditis or pericarditis. In most cases, symptoms have gotten better quickly with rest and medications. This side effect is less common and less severe than the serious heart complications we have seen in children with COVID-19 infection. Vaccination is recommended for everyone 12 years of age and older to prevent the serious complications associated with COVID-19 infection.

A rare side effect of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine may be seen in women under age 50, where they develop low platelets (a part of blood that helps with clotting) and blood clots. This is called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome. There are also rare reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome, although it is not clear that this is directly related to the vaccine. Guillain-Barre syndrome can occur after many viral infections and vaccines and is not specific to the COVID-19 vaccine. These side effects are very rare and have not been reported in the mRNA vaccines.

Does the vaccine help prevent COVID-19 spread in communities, even if a vaccinated person gets infected?

Several studies show that if a vaccinated person gets infected with COVID-19 (which is very rare and called a “breakthrough infection”), they have far less detectable virus in their system. That means they are less likely to spread infections to other people.

If I had a documented, confirmed case of COVID-19, do I still need the vaccination?

If you previously had COVID-19, you can and should still get vaccinated as long as you are not in an isolation or quarantine period for a current positive COVID-19 test or exposure.

If I have had an antibody test that shows COVID-19 antibodies, do I still need the vaccination?

Yes. You can and should still get vaccinated.

When does my protection start after the vaccine?

You may consider yourself fully vaccinated two weeks after your second dose of the vaccine. People in the studies of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines had 95% protection from COVID-19 infection beginning 1-2 weeks after their second dose of the vaccine. Similar studies show that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was 66% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection and highly effective in preventing hospitalization and death due to COVID-19.

Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from COVID-19 vaccines?

The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Since there’s still a lot we don’t know about the virus, we don’t yet know how long natural immunity might last. The information we have so far shows that most people get a bigger immune response, if we look at how much antibody they make, from the vaccine than they do from natural infection.

Scheduling A COVID-19 Vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccine is available to all adults and children in Arkansas 12 years of age and older. We encourage all eligible individuals to get the vaccine as soon as possible. To book your vaccination appointment, you can find the location that is closest and most convenient for you at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or by calling the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) vaccine call center at 1-800-985-6030.

At Arkansas Children's, we are offering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to qualifying individuals between the ages of 12 and 21. Visit [archildrens.org/getmyvaccine](https://www.archildrens.org/getmyvaccine) to schedule an appointment.