Taking a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to protect yourself and others. Now that you’ve been vaccinated, what do you need to know?

What the vaccine does to protect you
All the COVID-19 vaccines teach your body how to recognize and fight the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Medical experts are learning how long the vaccines protect you. They are also still learning if people who are vaccinated can spread the virus even if they don’t feel sick. They will know more as more people are vaccinated.

You need two doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines
Get the same brand for your second dose as you did for your first.

The timing between your first and second doses depends on which vaccine you received:
- for the Pfizer-BioNTech - second dose at least 3 weeks (or 21 days) after your first
- for the Moderna - second dose at least 1 month (or 28 days) after your first

Get your second dose as close to the recommended time as possible. If you have to get the second dose later than the recommended time, that is okay. Just get it as soon as you can. You don’t need to start over.

The second dose is very important: it increases your protection against Covid-19 and you are not considered fully vaccinated until 2 weeks after your second dose.

You only need one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine
Your body will be ready to protect you 2 weeks after just one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Short-term side effects
Many people have side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These side effects are not COVID-19. The vaccines do not contain live virus and cannot give you the disease.

Vaccine side effects are signs that your body is doing what it is supposed to do. It’s building protection against the virus. Some people have no side effects, but the vaccine is still building protection inside their bodies.
Common side effects can include:

- Soreness or redness where you got the shot
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Fever

Side effects usually go away on their own within a few days. If they don't, call your doctor or clinic. If you don't have a doctor, call 211 for help finding one.

Get the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna even if you have side effects after the first — unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to. For many people, the side effects are more noticeable after the second dose. Even though some side effects are no fun, they don't last long and are worth it to be protected from Covid-19.

Treating side effects

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot, apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area. Use or move your arm if it is sore.

To reduce discomfort from fever, drink plenty of fluids. Dress lightly.

Over the counter medicine

Do not take fever-reducing medicine before your appointment. Wait to see if you need it to relieve side effects.

You can take over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen (Advil), acetaminophen (Tylenol), aspirin, or antihistamines, if you have pain and discomfort after getting vaccinated. Take these medicines only if you have no medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally. If you have questions, talk to your doctor or clinic.

Pregnant people might be at more risk if they get a high fever and should use Tylenol to treat fever. Talk to your doctor or clinic if you have questions.

Rare, but serious, problems

It is rare, but some people have had a severe allergic reaction within 15 to 30 minutes of receiving the vaccine. All of these people received medical help right away. If you had a severe reaction, talk to your doctor before getting a second dose.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine could be linked with a very rare, but serious, blood clotting disorder. After more study, national and state health officials have agreed that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe to use.

If you receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, watch for these symptoms for three weeks after your shot:

- a severe headache or a headache that won't go away
- leg swelling or pain
- blurred vision
- chest or severe belly pain
- trouble breathing
- easy bruising or tiny blood spots under your skin outside of where you got your shot
**Protect yourself, protect others**

- It takes two weeks after your last dose to build the most protection for yourself.
- It will take some time before enough people have the vaccine that we can stop using everyday prevention.
- Some people can’t get vaccinated yet. Right now, there is no COVID-19 vaccine for kids and teens under 12.

While we build up our protection as a community, we still need to take care of our family, friends, and neighbors who are most at risk of getting very sick:

- Wear a mask when around others
- Wash your hands often, or use hand sanitizer
- Watch your distance (keep 6 feet between you and others)

- Some people will never be able to get the vaccine due to a health condition or allergy.
- We don’t know how well the current vaccines will protect us against new variants of the virus.

- Keep gatherings small, brief, and outdoors if possible
- Stay home if you are sick and talk to your doctor about getting a COVID-19 test.

Search COVID-19 on your county website to get local information.