

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Please Note: COVID-19 vaccine information is evolving rapidly as planning for mass vaccinations is underway. Information is emerging and may change.

Q: Is the vaccine(s) safe?

A: Yes, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the vaccine, through an emergency use authorization. A safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine is a critical component of the strategy to reduce illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths associated with the pandemic. The vaccine has already been tested in clinical trials with tens of thousands of volunteers and found to be safe and effective.

The Governors of California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington also formed the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup comprised of nationally acclaimed immunization and public health experts who independently reviewed the COVID-19 vaccine for safety and efficacy. The workgroup reviewed and assessed data on COVID-19 vaccines and the processes of the federal advisory committees and agencies.

On December 12, 2020, the workgroup unanimously recommended the Pfizer vaccine's usage concluding it is safe and efficacious. On December 20, 2020, the workgroup made the same unanimous recommendation that the Moderna vaccine be used concluding it is safe and efficacious. Finally, on January 7, 2021, the workgroup recommended that expanded resources be mobilized to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines be administered expeditiously.

The workgroup will continue to evaluate other COVID-19 vaccines following federal review processes.

Q: What are the side effects?

A: Most vaccines do cause mild side effects in a few people, such as soreness at injection site, fever, headache, or muscle aches. It is important to keep in mind that these side effects are far less severe than the disease itself. Vaccines are meant to stimulate the immune system. Short-term side effects may be a sign the vaccine is working. Serious side effects are very rare.

Additional information about each vaccine is available from the federal government, which has the responsibility for reviewing data about any possible side effects before and after vaccine approval.

Q: How many doses is Napa County getting?

A: Early on in the federal vaccination program, there will be a limited supply of vaccines. The majority of the doses we have received to date were directed to our acute care hospital and psychiatric facilities and congregate care facilities. As more vaccines become available, we have planned local vaccination clinics to cycle through the Phases and Tiers as prescribed by state vaccine task force guidelines.

Q: Who is giving the shots and where?

A: Healthcare providers identified in partnership with health care organizations at sites assessed to have the capacity to manage complex logistical challenges associated with the vaccine such as storage and the ability to administer the vaccinations.

Q: Who gets the vaccine first?

A: California is determining its distribution guidelines in an open and equitable fashion as initial vaccine supplies will be very limited. At first, vaccines will be provided to health care workers and those in long-term care settings in accordance with the [CDPH Allocation Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccine During Phase 1A](#). In Napa County, we have already started working with local acute care facilities on allocation and administration of vaccinations. To check the status of local vaccination efforts, visit [COVID-19 Vaccines | Napa County, CA \(countyofnapa.org\)](#)

Q: How will you prioritize who gets the vaccine next?

A: Once the supply of vaccine increases – which is expected to take several weeks – we will continue to follow state and federal allocation guidelines. Accordingly, the next priority will be essential workers, people with highest risk of severe COVID-19 disease, and persons in congregate settings.

After that, the guidelines next prioritize people with moderate risk of severe COVID-19 disease and other essential workforce, which will entail targeted vaccination efforts in collaboration with healthcare providers, employers and industry sector groups.

Once supplies are ample, we will implement community wide drive-through vaccination clinics like we do for flu vaccination. This will not happen until much later in Phase 3.

Q: When can I get the vaccine?

A: That depends on your employment and/or health care provider. Members of the general population can expect to wait until supplies of the vaccine are sufficient to provide widespread vaccinations. This is expected to take several weeks.

Q: How do I sign up to get the vaccine?

A: Individuals who have priority in accordance with state and federal allocation guidelines will be identified and signed up through their healthcare provider or employer. If you are in Phase 1A ([check here](#)) and have not already been contacted by your healthcare provider or employer, you can sign up at here: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/FormCenter/Public-Health-22/Napa-County-Public-Health-COVID19-Vaccin-110>

Q: I have underlying health issues. How can I get the vaccine before the general population does?

A: Individuals with underlying health issues should work with their primary care doctor to receive the vaccine, as health care entities are best positioned to know their patients' risks.

Q: How will you ensure equity when deciding who gets the vaccine?

A: We have developed a local Equity Task Force, which includes community partners that make up Live Healthy Napa County and the Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD). The objective of this group is to incorporate health equity in to vaccine planning and implementation.

Additionally, at the beginning of the pandemic, Napa County activated our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and part of EOC operations includes regular (at least weekly) cooperators briefings that include a wide variety of partners which will be kept informed regularly on local vaccination efforts.

And, California has introduced its “Vaccinate All 58” campaign, with the goal of achieving equity in vaccine distribution. More information can be found here: [California Department of Public Health Names Drafting Guidelines Workgroup to Advise State on COVID-19 Vaccines.](#)

Q: What will it cost to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

A: COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost, but they are only available as individuals become eligible according to State allocation guidelines.

Q: Do you need the COVID-19 vaccine if you have had COVID-19 in the past?

A: You need the vaccine even if you have had COVID-19 in the past. People who have been previously infected can be infected again. While data is limited, previously infected individuals may receive additional protection from getting vaccinated.

However, while vaccine supply is limited, health care organizations may prioritize those employees for vaccination who have NOT had a previous infection in the prior 90 days.

Q: Can my employer mandate that I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Businesses with questions about whether they can require their employees get vaccinated should consult with their attorneys.

Q: Will I receive proof of vaccination after I receive the vaccine?

A: You will be given a vaccination card after your first vaccination, which you should keep for your second appointment and for your records.

Q: What should I bring?

A: Please bring identification to your appointment and wear a top that allows for access to your upper arm area.

Q: How can I confirm my appointment?

A: You will receive a confirmation e-mail containing the time, date and location of your appointment.

Q: I need help registering for my vaccination appointment. What do I do?

A: If you need help registering for your vaccination, appointment please call our call center at (707) 253-4540.

Q: Can I pick which vaccine I get?

A: No. Vaccines remain in limited supply and we do not have local control over which vaccines we receive. The Pfizer vaccine has very complex logistical requirements which make it more appropriate for administering in a clinical setting whereas the Moderna vaccine is a better fit for administering in field settings like mass vaccination clinics. You will be provided with a card at the time of your vaccination identifying which vaccine you received.

Q: What happens if I miss or am late for the 2nd dose of the series?

A: If you miss your second dose appointment, you should reschedule as soon as possible.

Q: Do I need to take both doses?

A: Both doses are needed for full protection. A single dose conveys a lower degree of protection from the virus than two doses.

Q: Can I take my dose early if I have a scheduling conflict?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that it is safe to administer vaccines up to four days early. Anything beyond that should be considered an error and reported (to your healthcare provider or directly to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/>).

Q: What if I get infected with COVID-19 after the first dose of vaccine but before the second one? Will I need to wait and retake the 1st dose or just get the 2nd?

A: There is no need to retake the first dose. Wait for 10 days after last symptoms and then take the second dose of vaccine on your previously scheduled date, or any time after the second dose date IF the second dose date falls before the isolation period has ended.

Q: Once individuals have received the 2nd dose, do they still need to quarantine for 10 days if exposed to a COVID positive case?

A: Yes. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build protection against the virus following vaccination. Also, while there is strong evidence that the vaccine protects most people against symptomatic COVID-19, we do not know for sure whether the vaccine prevents transmission of the virus. For these reasons, it is still very important for those who have received the vaccine to watch for symptoms and adhere to all quarantine protocols.

Q: Does my 2nd dose need to be the same brand as my first dose?

A: Yes

Q: What if there is not enough vaccine for my 2nd dose? Will I need to start over?

A: No, you will not need to start over. Second doses are typically administered 28 days after the first dose but can be administered up to 48 days later and still be effective in protecting against the virus.

Q: Do I need to get my 2nd dose the same place I received my first dose?

A: Yes

Q: Should I expect side effects from my 2nd dose?

A: The most commonly reported side effects, which typically lasted several days, were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. Of note, more people experienced these side effects after the second dose than after the first dose, so it is important for vaccination providers and recipients to expect that there may be some side effects after either dose, but even more so after the second dose.