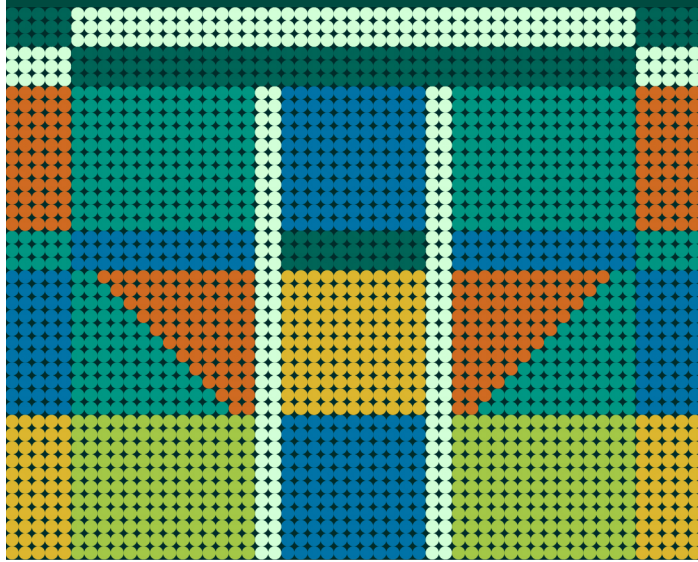


Information about mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

(i.e., Moderna and Pfizer)



This fact sheet contains information about the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (i.e., Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech) that is intended to help you make the most informed decision possible about getting the vaccine to better protect yourself, your loved ones, and tribal communities, both urban and rural.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the FDA on December 19, 2020. The Pfizer vaccine received approval from the FDA on August 23, 2021. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends COVID-19 vaccination for everyone ages 12 and up.

Who are the vaccines for?

The COVID-19 vaccines are used to prevent COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and severe disease. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is available for those 18 years and older while the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for those 12 years and older.

However, you should talk with your provider to discuss the risks and benefits before getting the vaccine if you:

- have any allergies, especially to other vaccines.
- have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner.
- are immunocompromised or are taking medication that affects your immune system.
- have a fever.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding.
- have received another COVID-19 vaccine.^{1,2}

You should not get the vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of the vaccine or if you have had a severe allergic reaction to any of the vaccine ingredients.^{1,2}

A list of ingredients can be found on the official Moderna/Pfizer-BioNTech fact sheets.^{1,2}

Are the vaccines safe?

The COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and are safe and effective. During clinical trials, over 70,000 people participated in testing the vaccines, including a small number of Native people. According to CDC, over 172 million people have been fully vaccinated with either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as of October 12, 2021.³

How do the vaccines work?

The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines use mRNA technology to start an immune response that helps your body produce antibodies to protect against future infection of COVID-19.

mRNA technology has been studied for decades, and Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech used this type of science to assist in creating the current vaccines. More information about mRNA vaccines can be found on the CDC website.⁴

How are the vaccines given?

The vaccines are given in a series of two doses injected into the muscle in your upper arm. After receiving the first dose, you must plan on returning within 28 days (Moderna) or 21 days (Pfizer) for the second dose.

It is recommended that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of an mRNA vaccine to ensure they have the same amount of protection as those without compromised immune systems. If you have a compromised immune system, you should speak with your provider to see if an additional dose is recommended for you.

Will I need a COVID-19 booster shot?

Based on available data, scientists have determined that a booster shot will be needed to maintain protection against COVID-19 over time. The vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness and hospitalization as a result of COVID-19, but a booster dose will help give us increased protection from the virus and new variants that may occur. Many other vaccines also require booster shots, including the flu shot, HPV vaccine and Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) vaccine.

Booster shots of the Pfizer vaccine are now available under EUA by the FDA for these groups of people:

- Those 65 years of age and older
- Those 18–64 years at high risk of severe COVID-19 (ex: residents of long-term care facilities, those with underlying medical conditions)
- Those 18–64 years of age who live or work in high-risk settings (ex: healthcare workers, education staff, first responders, public transit workers, grocery store workers, etc.)

If you received your second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months ago and fall into one of the above groups, you are now eligible to receive a booster shot. Speak with your provider if you are unsure whether or not you are eligible.

At this time, booster shots are not yet available for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.⁵

Will the vaccines prevent me from getting COVID-19?

Although clinical trials indicate that the vaccines have been shown to prevent COVID-19, they may not protect everyone.⁴ It is important to continue to practice safety measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19, even after you are vaccinated.

Safety measures differ based on state, county, and city and may include:

- wearing a mask to protect others who either do not have the vaccine or are still waiting for theirs.
- watching your distance.
- washing your hands.
- following local public health recommendations.

What are the benefits of getting vaccinated?

- We protect ourselves from serious illness and hospitalization.
- We make our families and communities less vulnerable to infection.
- We are significantly less likely to get severe COVID-19 symptoms or fall deathly ill.

What are the risks of getting vaccinated?

Common side effects that have been reported after receiving the vaccines include:

- pain, swelling, or redness at the injection site.
- tenderness and swelling of the lymph nodes in the same arm of the injection.
- headache or fatigue.
- muscle or joint pain.
- chills or fever.
- nausea or vomiting.^{1,2}

Side effects after your second shot may be more intense than the side effects experienced after your first shot. While more serious side effects, such as severe allergic reactions and Bell's palsy, have been reported, these side effects are considered rare and there is currently not enough information to determine if they were caused by the vaccine.⁴

CDC is also monitoring rare reports of heart inflammation, also known as myocarditis or pericarditis, after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination. Cases have occurred more commonly in male adolescents and young adults under the age of 30, typically within several days following vaccination. You should seek medical care if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, or a fluttering or pounding heart after vaccination. Most patients who developed myocarditis or pericarditis after vaccination responded well and felt better after rest and minimal treatment.⁴

If you have adverse symptoms after receiving your vaccine...

These symptoms typically resolve within 24 hours. Call your provider if any side effects do not go away. In addition, you can report any side effects or concerns directly to the vaccine manufacturer:

For the Moderna vaccine

Report any side effects to ModernaTX, Inc. at 1-866-MODERNA (1-866-663-3762).

For the Pfizer vaccine

Report any side effects to Pfizer Inc. at 1-800-438-1985. You can also visit www.cvdvaccine.com or call 1-877-829-2619 for other concerns/questions.

References

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2. FDA. Vaccine Information Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers about Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). United States Food and Drug Administration. www.fda.gov/media/144414/download
3. CDC. COVID Data Tracker: COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated September 27, 2021. Accessed September 27, 2021. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>
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5. CDC. Who Is Eligible for a COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shot? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated October 7, 2021. Accessed October 7, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>