



### FAQ – COVID-19 Vaccines

As of 02/04/2022

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and free. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone ages 5+ to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 and its variants.

#### COVID-19 Booster Shots

**Everyone ages 12 to 17-years-old** should receive a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster dose at least 5 months after completing their primary vaccination series.

**Everyone ages 18 and older** should get a booster shot either 5 months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or 2 months after their initial J&J vaccine. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend a booster dose in children aged 5–11 years. As more data become available, this recommendation may be updated.

#### **Is a booster dose the same amount of vaccine as doses in the original vaccine series?**

The Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson booster doses are the same dosage as the original vaccine received in the series, while the Moderna booster dose is half the dosage compared to the original vaccine series.

#### **Can you mix and match the vaccines?**

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers it safe to receive a booster of either the Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson vaccines. In some situations, such as those who got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, mixing may even be recommended, as some studies indicate this may result in a stronger immune response. This is a decision individuals can make in consultation with their primary care provider or other trusted healthcare or public health expert.

#### **If we need a booster shot, does that mean that the vaccines aren't working?**

No. COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection, especially among certain populations, against mild and moderate disease.

#### **I received my vaccine outside of the United States. Am I eligible to get a booster?**

Individuals 18+ who were vaccinated outside the United States with a vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) should receive a *single booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine* at least six months after completing their primary series. See here for [a list of vaccines authorized by WHO](#).

#### **Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine booster?**

Please check the Solano Public Health's [COVID-19 Vaccine Information page](#) for vaccination locations within the county. For assistance with registration, call the Vaccine Assistance Line at 707-784-8655.



You may also check with your healthcare provider to provide you with additional information about vaccine availability. Individuals can also schedule an appointment at their nearest pharmacy.

### Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccines

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) now recommends the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years old. The vaccine is over 90% effective at preventing COVID-19 in children within this age group. This recommendation was made based on in-depth review of available safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy data.

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, children may have some side effects like those seen in adults and with other vaccines. These are normal signs that their body is building protection, but they should go away in a few days.

#### **Do children younger than 12 years old need to be vaccinated?**

With many children back in school and participating in extracurricular activities, COVID-19 vaccination among children ages 5 through 11 years is critical to preventing infection and possible severe disease, as well as reducing the spread of COVID-19. While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus, and there is no way to tell in advance if a child will get a severe or mild case.

#### **How does dosage work for children?**

Children ages 5 through 11 will receive an age-appropriate dose that is one-third of what adolescents and adults receive. Smaller needles, designed specifically for children, are used for children ages 5 through 11 years. COVID-19 vaccine dosage does not vary by patient weight but by age on the day of vaccination. Children are still required to get two doses three weeks apart to be considered fully vaccinated.

#### **Is this Pfizer vaccine the same one that is given to adolescents and adults?**

The Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 has the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to adults and adolescents. However, the vaccine for children comes in a different vial with a different color cap, and the dosage for this age group is one-third of the dosage for adolescents and adults. The vaccine that is given to adults and adolescents cannot be used for children ages 5 through 11 years.

#### **Is it safe to co-administer COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, like flu?**

Yes, if a patient is eligible, both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit, as [recommended by CDC](#). In addition to flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine can be given with other vaccines as well.

#### **Is there an increased vaccination risk to children who have pre-existing conditions like asthma?**

Youth aged 5 and up can still receive the COVID-19 vaccine even if they have health conditions. Talk to your doctor or clinic about your child's specific conditions.

#### **Will children have to get vaccinated to attend in-person schooling?**

Students will be required to be vaccinated for in-person learning **starting the term following FDA full approval of the vaccine** for their grade span (7-12 and K-6). The COVID-19 vaccine will be added to the



list of already required vaccinations for school, including vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella and more.

### Immunocompromised Additional Dose

Additional doses of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are now available for those with moderately to severely compromised immune systems.

This includes people who:

- Get **active cancer treatment** for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Got an **organ transplant** and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Got a **stem cell transplant** within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Have **moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency** (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Have **advanced or untreated HIV infection**
- Get **active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids** or other drugs that suppress the immune response

Talk to your doctor to see if getting an additional dose is right for you.

### Eligibility

#### Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

Anyone 5 years old and over can get vaccinated.

#### Are vaccines free?

Yes, vaccines are provided for free to anyone living in the United States, regardless of immigration or health insurance status.

#### How will I know when and where to go?

Please check the Solano Public Health's [COVID-19 Vaccine Information page](#) for more information about vaccination locations within the county. You may also check with your healthcare provider to provide you with additional information about vaccine availability. More clinics can also be found using the state's MyTurn notification and vaccine clinic platform at [www.myturn.ca.gov](http://www.myturn.ca.gov), where you can find more information about vaccine clinics surrounding Solano County.

#### How do I get a proof of vaccination?

Visit [myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov](http://myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov), and enter your name, date of birth and the phone number or email that you used to sign up for your vaccine appointment.



If your record still isn't found, contact your provider to update your vaccination record or request a review of your record through the [CDPH Virtual Assistant](#) or call the Solano County Vaccination Assistance Line at **707-784-8655**.

### Fully Vaccinated Individuals

#### **When is a person considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19?**

A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) or two weeks after receipt of the single dose of the Janssen vaccine.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic (must continue to monitor for symptom development for 14 days and testing on day 5-7 is recommended by the CDC)
- Travel within the United States without needing to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel (unless required by the destination)
- Travel internationally without needing to get tested before leaving the U.S. (unless required by the destination abroad) and do not need to self-quarantine after returning to the U.S. (unless required by the destination, and CDC still recommends testing 3-5 days upon returning from international travel)

#### **How long is the protection from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

We are still unsure of the length of the protection for the vaccines. Experts are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity to the COVID-19 virus.

#### **I was vaccinated outside of the United States with a different type of vaccine. How do I know if I'm considered fully vaccinated?**

If you completed all the recommended doses of a vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO), you are considered fully vaccinated. WHO has listed the following COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use:

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (e.g., BNT162b2, COMIRNATY, Tozinameran)
- AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine (e.g., [ChAdOx1-S (recombinant)], AZD1222, Covishield, Vaxzevria)
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 Vaccine (e.g., Ad26.COV2.S)
- Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (e.g., mRNA 1273, Takeda, Spikevax)
- Sinopharm-BIBP COVID-19 Vaccine
- Sinovac-CoronaVac COVID-19 Vaccine
- Bharat Biotech International COVID-19 Vaccine (e.g., BBV152, COVAXIN)



If you received all or some of the recommended doses of a COVID-19 vaccine series with a vaccine that is *not listed for emergency use by WHO*, you should get vaccinated with an FDA-approved or FDA-authorized vaccine (2-dose Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna or single Janssen dose) at least 28 days after receiving the last dose of a non-authorized vaccine.

## Safety and Effectiveness

### Why should I get vaccinated?

Vaccination is an important tool to help stop the pandemic. It protects you and others by reducing infection and the spread of COVID-19. Together, the vaccine and other public health measures (like wearing a face covering and social distancing) will offer the best protection from COVID-19, reducing further spread so businesses and schools can fully reopen, and we can return to a more normal way of life.

### Are the vaccines safe and effective?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine is safe. It has undergone tens of thousands of clinical trials and has met the FDA's rigorous standards for safety needed to support emergency use. Vaccines have a long history of safety and effectiveness. While infrastructure to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines is being scaled up as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an independent group of experts that reviews all the safety data as it comes in and provides regular safety updates. The State of California also conducts its own review of the vaccines' clinical data to ensure they're safe to use. The CDC, Food and Drug Administration and healthcare providers will continue safety monitoring as more people are vaccinated to learn about any additional vaccine side effects.

### How does the vaccine work?

The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are mRNA vaccines. The vaccines do not contain live viruses and cannot cause COVID-19 infection. The contents of the vaccine are rapidly broken down by the human body after injection and do not interact with or affect with a person's DNA. The vaccines use messenger RNA to teach the body's own cells to produce antibodies to protect itself from COVID-19. Both vaccines require two doses over a three- to four-week period.

The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine is a viral vector vaccine, meaning it uses a modified version of a different virus to deliver important instructions to our cells. It does not contain live viruses and cannot cause COVID-19 infection.

### What are the side effects?

Common side effects include pain and swelling on the injection site and fever, chills, tiredness, and headache throughout the rest of the body. These side effects are normal signs that the body is building protections. These side effects may affect the ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

### If I am pregnant, can I still receive the vaccine?

If you are pregnant, it is recommended that you receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Based on how the vaccines



work in the body, experts believe they do not pose a specific risk for people who are pregnant and may be beneficial for protecting the child in utero and in the first year of life. You may want to have a conversation with your healthcare provider to help you decide whether to get vaccinated with a vaccine that has been authorized for use under Emergency Use Authorization. However, there are currently limited data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant people.

### **What happens if I miss or am late for the second dose of the series?**

If you miss your second dose appointment, you should reschedule as soon as possible. The CDC recommends following recommended guidelines, but if this is not feasible, the second dose of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccine can be administered up to six weeks after the first one. Both doses are needed for full protection. A single dose conveys a lower degree of protection from the virus than two doses. There is no reason to schedule a third dose if the second is received late.

### **Can I take my dose early if I have a scheduling conflict?**

The 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).

### **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 first dose or just get the second?**

There is no need to retake the first dose. Self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or from the testing date if you are asymptomatic. Schedule your second dose appointment after the self-isolation period is complete.

### **Can you get COVID-19 after being vaccinated? What are breakthrough infections?**

Yes, there is a chance of contracting COVID-19 after being vaccinated. A breakthrough infection is an infection with a virus, bacterium, or other germ after you have been vaccinated. This is an expected occurrence for a small percentage of those who are vaccinated, since no vaccine is 100% effective. Research shows that people who are boosted have additional protection, reducing their risk of getting infected.

### **How can I prevent a breakthrough COVID-19 infection?**

Solano County Public health advises that everyone gets vaccinated and boosted. Regardless of vaccination status, continue to follow all safety precautions (masking, social distancing and hand hygiene) while the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Avoid indoor gatherings, especially when many people are present, mask-wearing is inconsistent, or ventilation is poor. The basic coronavirus precautions are effective in lowering your chances of becoming infected with the coronavirus, even after you have been fully vaccinated.

### **FACT SHEETS**

Both Pfizer and Moderna have created fact sheets that include common side effects and other information you should know:



**SOLANO  
COUNTY**

**HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC HEALTH**

[Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet](#)  
[Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet](#)  
[Pfizer-BioNTech Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet](#)  
[Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet](#)  
[Get the Facts on Vaccines Fact Sheet](#)

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

CDC [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)  
CDPH [COVID-19 Vaccine Page](#)