

What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a bad disease. It makes people very sick. COVID-19 has spread around the world. A lot of people have died from COVID-19. Lots of people are still dying from COVID-19.

COVID-19 changed the way we live. We have to try and stay safe from COVID-19. That means we have to do a lot of things differently.

- People have to stay far away from each other.
- We have to stay in our homes a lot.
- We might not be able to go to school.
- We might not be able to go to work.
- If we go outside, we have to wear a mask.

These things keep us safe.

We want COVID-19 to go away. We want to go back to normal.

What is a vaccine?

A **vaccine** is a shot. It keeps you from getting sick.

Doctors give people shots to keep us from being sick.

- There is a shot to keep you from getting chicken pox.
- There is a shot to keep you from getting the measles.
- There is a shot to keep you from getting the flu.

Now there is a shot to keep you from getting COVID-19. That shot is called the **COVID-19 vaccine**.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccine keeps you safe from COVID-19. Once you get the vaccine, you probably won't get sick from COVID-19.

This is a good thing! COVID-19 can make people very sick. It can give people health problems for the rest of their lives. It can even kill people. Because COVID-19 is so bad, it's important to get the vaccine.

If enough people get the vaccine, then no one will get sick from COVID-19.

You can help stop COVID-19. You can get the vaccine.

What will getting the vaccine be like?

Getting the vaccine will be like getting other shots. A doctor, nurse, or pharmacist will give you the shot.

You will need to get 2 shots.

- First, you will get one shot.
- Then, you will wait one month.
- Then, you will get a second shot.

You might feel a little sick after you get your shot. That happens with shots sometimes. You are still okay. You will feel better in a day or two.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe.

The vaccine got tested on lots of people.

It got tested on people of different ages.

It got tested on people from different races.

Almost everyone who got the vaccine felt fine after.

The COVID-19 vaccine works.

When can I get the vaccine?

A lot of people need to get the vaccine. So, we have to go in order.

1. First, people like doctors and nurses will get the vaccine.
2. Then, people in **high-risk** groups will get the vaccine. High-risk can mean 2 things.

High-risk can mean people who are the most likely to catch COVID-19. For example:

- People who live in institutions or jails.
- Support workers.
- Homeless people.

High-risk can also mean people who are more likely to get really sick, or die, if they catch COVID-19. For example:

- Older people
- People with certain disabilities, like Down Syndrome or diabetes.

3. Then, everybody else will get the vaccine.

It will take a few months to give everybody the vaccine. Your doctor can tell you when it's your turn to get the vaccine.

Do I still need to wear a mask after I get the vaccine?

The vaccine works really well to keep you from getting sick. But, you might still be able to give COVID-19 to other people. It will take a while for everyone to get the vaccine. We still need to be careful so everyone can stay safe.

- We will need to keep wearing a mask.
- We will need to keep staying at home.
- We will need to keep staying away from other people.

We won't need to do these things forever. But we need to do them for a little while longer.

We need to do these things until enough people get the shot. Then, COVID-19 will be over. Then, we can stop.

We think about 7 out of every 10 people need to get the vaccine before COVID-19 is over. In America, that's about 230 million people.

It will take a few months for that to happen. It will probably take until fall. It might take until the end of the year.

COVID-19 has been really hard. It has been hard to change so many things. It has been scary for so many people to get sick.

But we know how to keep each other safe. And if we all get the vaccine, we can stop COVID-19 for good.

It is almost over. We can do this.

Words to Know

COVID-19

A bad disease that has spread around the world. It makes people very sick and can kill people.

Vaccine

A shot a doctor gives you to keep you from getting sick.

COVID-19 vaccine

A shot that can keep you from getting COVID-19.

High-risk

Can mean 2 things. High-risk can mean people who are the most likely to catch COVID-19. High-risk can also mean people who are more likely to get really sick, or die, if they catch COVID-19.

To Learn More

- Plain Language COVID-19 Resources: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/covid-pl/>
- Easy to Read COVID-19 Safety: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/easy-to-read/index.html>
- “Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine” Social Story: <https://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/publications/documents/GettingACOVID19VaccineSocialStoryIDD-F.pdf>
- Facts About the COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>
- Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/vaccines/toolkits/CBO-FAQs.pdf>