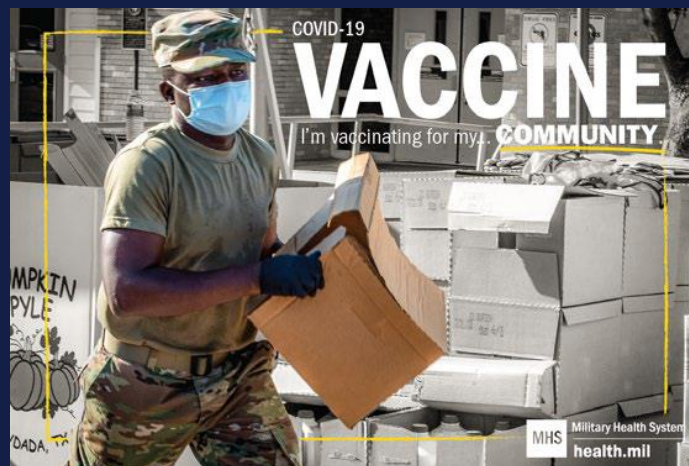
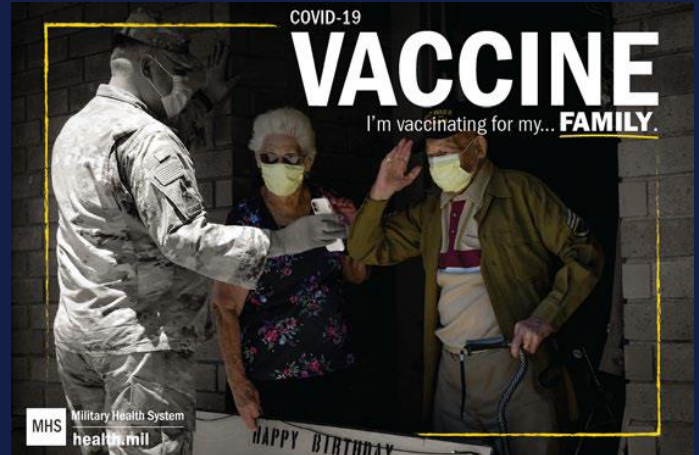


COVID-19 Vaccine Information Toolkit



COVID-19
VACCINE

What you need to know to keep your family safe and healthy.

COVID-19 Overview

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a novel coronavirus first identified in December 2019, that has since spread around the world. Although most people who have COVID-19 have mild symptoms, COVID-19 can also cause severe illness and even death. Some groups, including older adults and people who have certain underlying medical conditions, are at increased risk of severe illness or death. The U.S. effort to develop COVID-19 vaccines, called Operation Warp Speed, aims to deliver safe and effective vaccines, which will increase over time.

How Vaccines Help

Vaccines are among the most important accomplishments in medicine. They have saved more lives around the world than any other medical invention, including antibiotics or surgery. Vaccines provide a safe and effective means of countering the threats to personal health and military readiness.

The COVID-19 Vaccine

Two COVID-19 vaccines are authorized for emergency use, manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna.

COVID-19 vaccines will be given in a two-dose series, separated by 21 or 28 days, depending on the specific version of vaccine available to you.

All vaccine recipients will be provided a copy of the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card after receipt of the vaccine. The 355th MDG will assist in scheduling second-dose appointments.

Vaccine Safety

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Emergency Use Authorization has authorized the use of COVID-19 vaccines after careful and rigorous testing and trials.

None of the factors that contributed to the accelerated development of a COVID-19 vaccine imply that safety, scientific or ethical integrity are compromised, or that short-cuts have been made. The DoD has full confidence in the safety, and efficacy of vaccine.

Emergency Use Authorizations

Drugs and vaccines have to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that only safe and effective products are available to the American public. During public health emergencies, when there is good scientific reason to believe that a product is safe and is likely to treat or prevent disease, the FDA may authorize its use through an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). FDA pre-licensure approval is considered for treatment or prevention of diseases that are very serious.

In public health emergencies, such as a pandemic, the vaccine development process may be atypical. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, investments and partnerships by the U.S. government have prioritized development and distribution of the most promising vaccines that have met the FDA's rigorous and science-based standards for quality, safety, and effectiveness.

COVID-19 vaccines are rigorously tested for safety and efficacy during the development process. The FDA then undertakes a comprehensive review of all accumulated safety and manufacturing data from the manufacturer to determine if it adequately ensures product quality and consistency before authorizing its use.

COVID-19 vaccine availability in the DoD

There is a limited quantity of COVID-19 vaccine initially available, and the DoD is following the CDC's prioritization guidelines for distribution. Active Duty and their dependents, Retirees, Reserve Components, DoD employees and contractors who normally receive vaccines in accordance with DoD regulation will be eligible to receive the vaccine based on the prioritization plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

Vaccination Safety

How do we know if the vaccine is safe? How will you monitor and track vaccine side effects?

The DoD is confident in the stringent regulatory process and requirements of the FDA. Manufacturers are required to submit their raw data for the FDA to review. Safety, immune response, and efficacy data from the trial stages are submitted to the FDA before they are authorized for use and distribution. Per FDA requirements, DoD will be monitoring and tracking vaccine reports of vaccine side effects through various surveillance activities both internal and external to the DoD.

What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

Drugs and vaccines have to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that only safe and effective products are available to the American public. In situations when there is good scientific reason to believe that a product is safe and is likely to treat or prevent disease, the FDA may authorize its emergency use under specific circumstances. Vaccines authorized for emergency use are offered on a voluntary basis.

Can someone get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, it is not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines. Vaccines against COVID-19 use inactivated virus, parts of the virus, or a gene from the virus. None of these can cause COVID-19.

Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I'm pregnant, may become pregnant, am breast feeding or am immunocompromised?

Yes, however the vaccine risks associated with pregnancy and lactation are unknown. Please talk with your medical support team about your individual risk factors and appropriate precautions.

Vaccination Availability

Who is able to get the vaccine now? How is that determined?

Vaccination distribution prioritization will focus on those providing direct medical care, maintaining essential national security and installation functions, deploying forces, and those at the highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19, before other members of the DoD population. The DoD is following the CDC's prioritization guidelines for distribution.

Will the DoD provide vaccines for civilian employees and contractor staff working in military hospitals or clinics?

The DoD will offer vaccine to civilian and contractor staff with direct patient care and to those who normally receive vaccine for occupational health purposes, as authorized in accordance with DoD regulation. This may include some of those working on installations, and the DoD is continuing to refine these populations in preparation for future vaccination efforts.

Will TRICARE beneficiaries including military retirees have access to the vaccine?

Yes, based on DoD prioritization. While there is currently limited vaccine availability, vaccination distribution prioritization will focus on those providing direct medical care, maintaining essential national security and installation functions, deploying forces, and those beneficiaries at the highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19. TRICARE beneficiaries empaneled at a DoD Military Treatment Facility (MTF) are eligible to receive the vaccine at a DoD MTF. TRICARE beneficiaries who receive care at DoD MTFs on a space-available basis can alternately receive vaccine through the local civilian jurisdiction.

Should children get a vaccine?

The current vaccine trials have not studied the safety and efficacy for children and manufactures are not currently asking the FDA for authorization to vaccinate children.

Where should I be vaccinated?

To the greatest extent possible, beneficiaries in priority groups who are enrolled at Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) should come to the MTF to be vaccinated. This will ensure the maximum number of vaccine opportunities allocated to jurisdictions other than DoD are available for the non-DoD population. TRICARE beneficiaries who receive care at DoD MTFs on a space-available basis can alternately receive vaccine through the local civilian jurisdiction.

Will DoD require all service members to receive the vaccine?

No. The vaccine will be offered on a voluntary basis. Priority populations are encouraged to receive the vaccine. When formally licensed by the FDA, the DoD may require a vaccine for military personnel or personnel in specific fields, as is the case for the influenza vaccine.

However, any Active Duty Airman notified of a mandatory appointment is required to show up to that appointment, at which point, they may decline the vaccine.

Vaccination Process

What kind of information will be available to me before I receive the vaccine?

Each potential recipient of COVID-19 vaccine will receive a vaccine-specific Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Fact Sheet for Recipients from the FDA, which will provide the following information:

- Basic information on COVID-19, symptoms, and what to discuss with a health care provider before vaccination
- Who should and should not receive the vaccine
- That recipients have the choice to receive the vaccine
- Dosage and vaccine series information
- Risks and benefits of the vaccine
- An explanation of what an EUA is and why it is issued
- Any approved available alternatives for preventing COVID-19

What precautions are being taken to ensure I do not have any adverse effects to the COVID-19 vaccine?

If you elect to receive the vaccine, there will be a mandatory 15-minute observation period that will be completed after vaccination. If you have a history of food, pet, insect, venom, environmental, latex, other vaccines or injectable, oral medication, family history or personal history of anaphylaxis you will be asked to wait 30 minutes before departing the vaccination location. These conditions will be screened for upon arrival.

How many doses of vaccine will I need?

COVID-19 vaccines will be given in a two-dose series separated by 21 or 28 days, depending on the available version of the vaccine.

Should I get the first dose of vaccine if I will deploy, go TDY or PCS in the near future?

Yes. It is recommended to get the vaccine available at your current location regardless of which version of the vaccine may be available at your new duty station, deployed location or TDY location.

How will I be able to keep track of what vaccine I got and when I need to get a second dose?

All vaccine recipients will be provided a copy of the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card after receipt of the vaccine. The 355th MDG will assist in scheduling second-dose appointments.

If I've already recovered from COVID-19 infection, do I need to be vaccinated?

Yes, because duration of immunity following COVID-19 infection is unknown, and the vaccine may be effective in protecting previously infected people.

If I get vaccinated, do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing?

Masks and physical distancing will still be necessary until a large proportion of the population is vaccinated and the vaccine is proven to provide long-term protection. Global and national public health authorities are expected to continue to recommend wearing masks and practicing physical distancing, for everyone, until pandemic risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

Should I get the vaccine for influenza (flu shot) or other vaccines?

Yes, but a 14-day waiting period should be observed after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. It is still very important to get the influenza vaccine, particularly this season when both influenza viruses and COVID-19 will infect people.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I've received other types of COVID-19 treatment?

Yes, however people who have received monoclonal antibody or convalescent sera products as part of COVID-19 treatment must wait 90 days before becoming eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. When in doubt, please discuss this with your medical support teams.