

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 2-16-2021

COVID-19 vaccines have been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use and limited supplies are available in Washington state.

We hope to have the vaccine available to our patients by the end of February 2021.

See the Department of Health timeline included at the end of this document for who is eligible for vaccines. You can also use **FindYourPhaseWA.org** to determine your eligibility and where to get vaccinated.

Vaccines are an important way we protect ourselves and our patients, especially communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. By getting many people vaccinated quickly, we can save lives, reduce the spread, and begin to reverse the harms caused to mental health and economic stability as a result of necessary community restrictions.

There is also a lot of false information about the vaccine online. Always check the source of that claim. [Watch this video with tips on how to determine if a claim is true or not:youtu.be/Ulov_crnFt8](https://youtu.be/Ulov_crnFt8)

Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID Vaccines

Is Neighborcare Health offering the vaccine?

We will have the vaccine available for patients at the end of February. We are planning several ways to notify patients when they are eligible for the vaccine and where to get vaccinated. See the next question for info on eligibility.

Who is eligible for the vaccine and where can I get it?

Because there are not enough vaccines available yet for everyone who wants one, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is prioritizing vaccines for people who are at higher risk of getting the virus or of having more serious complications if they get sick. These are based on recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visit FindYourPhaseWA.org to determine your eligibility or see the timeline at the end of these FAQs.

As of February 12, 2021, people who are eligible for the vaccine are (this info will change often):

- Anyone over age 65
- All people over 50 who also live in a multigenerational household (home where individuals from 2 or more generations reside such as an elder and a grandchild)

- Health care workers at high risk for COVID-19 infection
- First responders
- People who live or work in long-term care facilities
- All other workers in health care settings who are at risk of COVID-19

Is the vaccine safe?

COVID-19 vaccines have been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use. In the U.S., COVID-19 vaccines (and other vaccines) must meet numerous safety and effectiveness standards, and go through thorough clinical trials before they are authorized for use. Many thousands of volunteers received the COVID vaccines during the clinical trials. In December 2020, the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use, based on its own evaluation of the data and science and that of a group of independent scientists and experts. Vaccines created by other companies are currently going through testing and trials.

Read more about ensuring safety of COVID vaccines on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)) and the [Department of Health website](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine) ([doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine)).

How do the vaccines work?

The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your immune system to recognize the coronavirus and your immune system makes antibodies (“fighter cells”) that stay in your blood and protect you in case you are infected with the virus. You get protection against the disease without having to get sick.

The authorized Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses, or two shots several weeks apart.

When enough people in the community can fight off the coronavirus, it has nowhere to go. This means we can stop the spread quicker and get a little closer to ending this pandemic.

The authorized vaccines do NOT give you COVID-19 and do NOT contain full versions of the virus.

- Watch this video on [how vaccines work in your body](https://youtu.be/k7E88xEGOaE) (youtu.be/k7E88xEGOaE)

What are the ingredients in the vaccines?

You may read or hear false information online or on social media about what is in the COVID-19 vaccines.

The vaccines DO contain the active ingredient of mRNA along with other ingredients like fat, salts, and sugars that protect the active ingredient, help it work better in the body, and protect the vaccine during freezing.

None of the authorized COVID vaccines or those in development contain the full virus.

They also **DO NOT** include:

- Fetal tissue
- DNA
- Antibiotics
- Blood products
- Preservatives, like thimerosal
- Mercury
- Gluten
- Egg proteins
- Pork products
- Microchips

[Visit Public Health—Seattle & King County's website](http://www.kingcounty.gov/covid/vaccine) (www.kingcounty.gov/covid/vaccine) for more information about the vaccine.

Are there side effects? Will I get sick after getting the vaccine?

Side effects may include headaches, tiredness, muscle/body aches, fever and a sore arm. These symptoms mean the vaccine is working and your body is responding, and they should go away within a few days. Even though the side effects are similar, **the vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.**

There have been some cases out of many millions, where people experienced an allergic reaction after getting vaccinated. These instances have been rare and are still being investigated to determine the cause.

You may read false information online or on social media about side effects. Make sure any time you see a claim about a side effect that you check the source of that claim. [Watch this video for tips on how to determine if a claim is true or not](https://youtu.be/Ulov_crnFt8) (youtu.be/Ulov_crnFt8).

Are there long-term side effects?

The vaccines were found safe and effective after tens of thousands of people received the vaccine in the trials. There are new and existing systems set up to continually monitor and evaluate side effects of the COVID vaccine as more people are vaccinated. Immediate action and communication will occur if a new side effect is discovered.

How much does the vaccine cost?

COVID vaccine will be covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance, and the cost of the vaccine will be covered for people who are uninsured. There may be a copay or office visit fee, depending on your insurance plan or the doctor you see to get vaccinated.

Public Health—Seattle & King County is also planning free vaccination clinics when enough supplies of vaccine are available.

Will I be required to get the vaccine? What if I do not want it?

Washington state is not currently considering any requirements for the vaccine, but employers could require it. It will be your choice whether to get the vaccine for COVID-19, but Neighborcare Health encourages people to get the vaccine when it becomes available. Make sure you are getting the most accurate information about the vaccine. Talk to your provider to learn more.

Many Neighborcare Health providers and staff have already gotten both doses of the vaccine because they believe it is important for our health and well-being of our community. We are encouraging others, especially communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID, to get their vaccine, too. By getting many people vaccinated quickly, we can save lives, reduce the spread, and begin to reverse the harms caused to mental health and economic stability as a result of necessary community restrictions.

Once I am fully vaccinated, do I still have to wear a mask and social distance?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine is just one tool to help end the pandemic. All of us must continue following public health guidelines including: wearing masks, staying six feet from others outside our households, following CDC guidance for traveling, avoiding crowds, and not gathering indoors with people we do not live with. Over time, as more people get vaccinated, we may not need to use all of these public health tools, but for now we must use them all.

If I already had COVID-19, should I get vaccinated?

Yes, there may be a benefit for people to get the vaccine even if they've already been sick with COVID-19. If you currently have or have recently been exposed to COVID-19, it's best to wait until you feel better or are through your quarantine period to get vaccinated. Talk to your medical provider.

Who should NOT get the vaccine?

- The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for emergency use in persons aged 16 years and older, so no one under 16 should get this vaccine.
- The Moderna vaccine is authorized for emergency use in individuals aged 18 years and older, so no one under 18 should get this vaccine.
- These vaccines should not be given to anyone who has a known severe allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccines.

I am pregnant, should I get the vaccine?

When available, we encourage everyone to get vaccinated when they become eligible because it is a key step in saving lives and ending the pandemic. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has published a statement that pregnant and lactating women can safely take the vaccine, but the decision should be made in partnership with the individual's health care team. If you are considering a future pregnancy, there is no evidence of any adverse impact of the vaccine, but please talk to your provider.

The vaccine trials did NOT include pregnant/lactating people so there is limited data about any special risks to these individuals. So far no specific concerns have been found, and these vaccines are not expected to have any increased risk to pregnant/lactating people.

Talk with your health care provider to decide if the vaccine is right for you.

I have other health conditions, should I get the vaccine?

When available, we encourage everyone to get vaccinated when they become eligible because it is a key step in saving lives and ending the pandemic.

There are no chronic conditions that exclude people from getting the vaccine at this time. We do know that having chronic health conditions can increase the risk of severe COVID illness leading to hospitalization and death, so it is even more important for people with these conditions to consider being vaccinated to protect themselves.

Talk with your health care provider to decide if the vaccine is right for you.

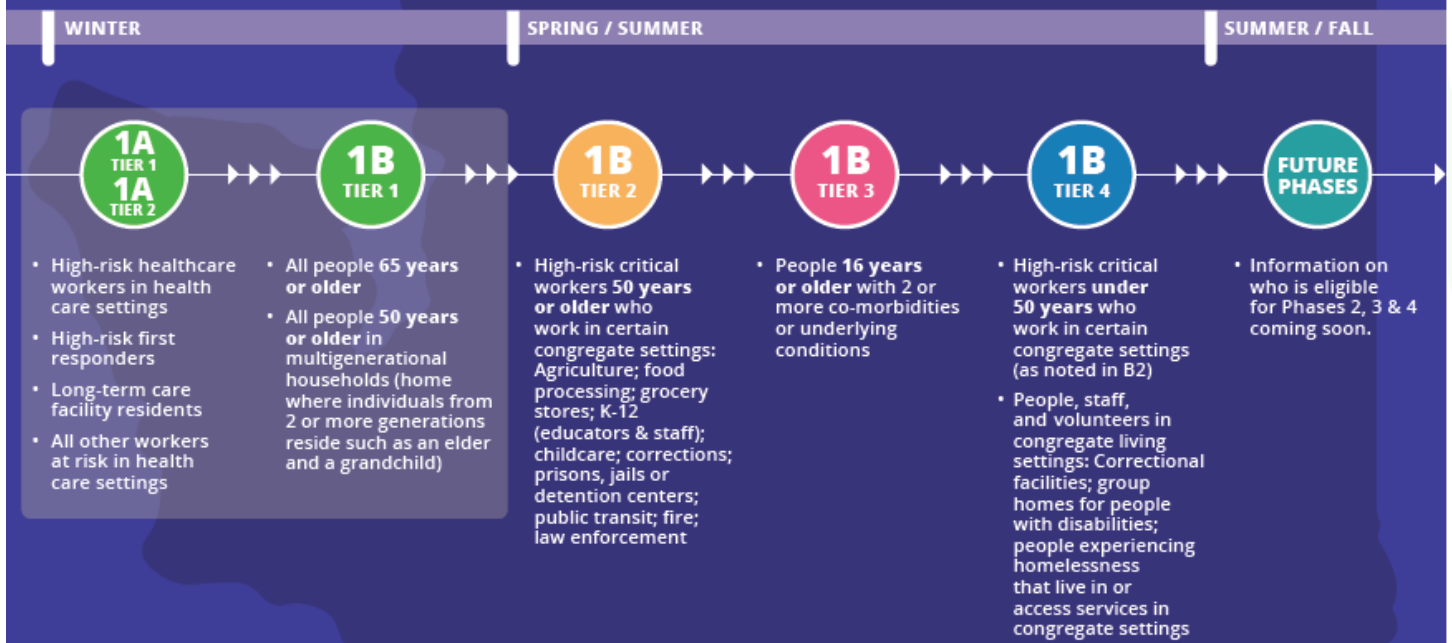
I have more questions about the vaccine, what should I do?

Read this [FAQ from Public Health—Seattle & King County](https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine/FAQ.aspx) (kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine/FAQ.aspx) and this [FAQ from the Washington State Department of Health](https://doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine) (doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine). Also, be sure to talk to your medical provider.

WASHINGTON'S COVID-19 VACCINE PHASES

Phase 1 Estimated Start Dates (Tiers A and B)

Find out if it's your turn at [FindYourPhaseWA.org](https://www.findyourphasewa.org)



FOCUS ON EQUITY: This approach prioritizes population groups that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 due to external social factors and systemic inequities.

The timelines represented here are estimates and subject to change.

Vaccinate WA
CovidVaccineWA.org