



Frequently Asked Questions

Vaccine Basics

Q: What are the factors guiding vaccine distribution in New York State?

A: New York State has established a task force comprised of experts in public health, immunizations, government operations, data and other fields relevant to vaccine distribution and administration, to advise the set up and operation of the state's COVID-19 vaccination program. Under the plan, the state has been divided into 10 regional deployment HUBs. As the Mid-Hudson region HUB, WMCHealth is sharing vaccine-related information with the community. The CDC also issued guidelines that outline a phased approach to distribution of the vaccine. In addition, vaccine is being shipped on a regular basis to the states which are then distributing it under their own programs. All of these factors play into when an individual will become eligible to get the vaccine. **As more detailed information becomes available about how, when and where members of our community can receive the vaccine, we will continue to post it on The WMCHealth Coronavirus Digital Resource Center website: <https://covidinfo.wmchealth.org> with links to the state's program.**

Q: When can I get vaccinated?

A: New York State is currently vaccinating eligible New Yorkers who are in Phase 1a and Phase 1b population groups. Phase 1b which began January 11, includes vaccination for people age 65 and over, teachers, first responders, public transit workers, grocery store and public safety and corrections workers. The entire community vaccine process is expected to take months to complete. To keep track of which phases are open for vaccine availability and who is eligible in each phase, please use this [link](#) to the state's website or call The New York State Vaccination Hotline 1-833-NYS-4VAX (1-833-697-4829).

Q: Which vaccine am I getting?

A: New York's Clinical Advisory Task Force, comprised of leading scientists, doctors and health experts, will review every COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use. All vaccines released have passed the FDA emergency use authorization process. Currently, two COVID-19 vaccines have been approved by the FDA and New York State's independent Clinical Advisory Task Force: one that was developed by Pfizer and BioNTech and another that was developed by

Moderna. Both vaccines have been shown in clinical studies to be 94-95% effective, and have similar side effects. The brand of your first dose will be the brand of your second dose.

Q: Is the vaccine safe?

A: Yes, the vaccine is considered to be safe. It has been authorized for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and by New York State's independent COVID-19 Clinical Advisory Task Force. In addition, these are mRNA vaccines, and the history of mRNA vaccines in particular is very long, with the first mRNA vaccines developed in the 1990s.

Q: I hear there might be side effects?

A: Currently, according to safety data from the clinical trials, the vaccines have a favorable safety profile, and most of the side effects are limited and mild to moderate.

Q: Is it effective?

A: Yes, each of these vaccines has been shown to be 94-95% effective in preventing illness from the virus if both doses are taken as prescribed. These vaccines are currently the best way to protect oneself from getting ill from the virus. As of now, it is not clear whether a person who received the vaccine can still transmit the virus to others.

Q. How much does the vaccine cost?

A: The vaccine itself is free to each person. If you do have medical insurance, you will be asked to provide your insurance information. Please bring your insurance card (if applicable) and a form of identification, drivers license, etc. There will be no out-of-pocket costs charged to you, whether you have insurance or not.

Q. I do not have health insurance. Can I still get the vaccine?

A: Yes. If you do not have health insurance, you can still get the vaccine.

Q. Do I need show proof of eligibility?

A: Yes, once you have an appointment, you must bring proof of eligibility to your appointment,

IF:

- You are eligible due to your employment as an essential worker, you must prove you are employed in the State of New York. Such proof may include:
 - employee ID card or badge,

- letter from an employer or affiliated organization, or
 - pay stub, depending on the specific priority status.
- You are eligible due to your age, you must produce proof of age and proof of residence in New York.

To prove New York residence, you must show:

- One of the following: State or government-issued ID; Statement from landlord; Current rent receipt or lease; Mortgage records; or
- Two of the following: Statement from another person; Current mail; School records.

For age, such proof may include:

- Driver's license or non-driver ID;
- Birth certificate issued by a state or local government;
- Current U.S passport or valid foreign passport;
- Permanent resident card;
- Certificate of Naturalization or Citizenship;
- Life insurance policy with birthdate; or
- Marriage certificate with birthdate.

Q: Will the distribution of the vaccine be equitable?

A: Yes. The vaccine distribution will be fair and equitable, with outreach to under-served communities to make community members aware of the vaccine, its benefits, and how to get vaccinated. To ensure equitable distribution, we have created the WMCHHealth Regional Vaccination Health Equity Task Force, comprised of representatives from community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, social service agencies, academic institutions, LGBT organizations and many more located throughout the Hudson Valley Region.

Q: How many doses do I need? Can we be sure the second vaccination will be available if we get the first one?

A: For the two vaccines currently in use, you will need two doses to have the full effect of the vaccine, either three or four weeks apart, depending on which brand you receive. The brand of your first dose will be the brand of your second dose.

Q: Do mask and other requirements change if I get vaccinated?

A: No. At this time, there is no indication that mask and other requirements such as physical distancing will change for those receiving the vaccine.

Q: How long will the effects of vaccination last?

A: This is currently unknown. It is possible the initial doses of the vaccine will provide long-term immunity from COVID-19 or it may be that you will need to be vaccinated every year, similar to the flu vaccine.

Q: I had COVID already. Do I need a vaccine?

A: Yes. There is not enough information available yet to know if, or for how long, natural immunity lasts. There are no known risks to receiving the vaccine based upon whether you have already had the disease.

Q: Can I get COVID from the vaccine?

A: No. This is not possible. The COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for use in the United States are mRNA vaccines and do not contain the virus itself. This means that the vaccines provide genetic material (mRNA) which “teaches” the body’s cells to make proteins, which in turn stimulate the production of antibodies by the body. These antibodies counteract the ability of the coronavirus to produce its damaging effects and make someone sick. The mRNA injected with the vaccine quickly disappears and does not result in any other impact. Again, no virus itself is part of either of these two vaccines so it is impossible to get the illness caused by the virus from these vaccines.

Q: How do I get more information?

A: New York State has a website for all information related to the COVID-19 vaccines. The URL is ny.gov/vaccine. This website has updated information about the vaccine, the distribution process, list of people eligible for vaccination in each phase, frequently asked questions, and more. This is also where you will find the link for vaccination registration and The New York State Vaccination Hotline which is 1-833-NYS-4VAX (1-833-697-4829).

Sources: New York State, New York State Department of Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control

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