

ALASKA  
**COVID-19**  
**VACCINE TASK FORCE**

**COVID-19 Vaccine Message Maps | Version 9 | March 17, 2021**

Latest version: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19VaccineMessageMaps.pdf>

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## Introduction

Good vaccine communication has never been more challenging – or more important. We are all “building the plane as we fly it” as we share fast-changing information and protect our communities from misinformation. To support Alaska’s health messengers, the Communications and Education Strategy branch of the Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force will issue this message map document on a weekly or as-needed basis.

**All Alaskans have full permission to copy or edit these messages for their communications. No credit is needed.**

We suggest...

- **using yellow highlighted** or **bold text** to prepare for interviews, make slide decks, or develop social media posts
- using bullet points to answer questions, develop fact sheets, or write emails
- copying an entire page and putting your logo on it for a quick fact sheet
- using the whole page as a script for a 60-90 second PSA

These messages were last approved for accuracy and style on the date listed at the bottom of this page. New versions are posted every Friday at this link:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19VaccineMessageMaps.pdf>

### What is a message map?

A message map is a CDC risk communications tool designed to share uncertain or complicated information in the way that helps both messenger and audience. Message maps generally follow the communications “Rule of Three” and are presented in two layers. Whenever possible, Message Maps follow American Medical Association guidance for readability and health literacy.

### Contacts

Email our team with the subject line “message map”:

- [sarah.aho@alaska.gov](mailto:sarah.aho@alaska.gov) – to request a new message map and for feedback on content or science translation
- [shannon.kuhn@alaska.gov](mailto:shannon.kuhn@alaska.gov) – for comments on accessibility or language translation requests

## 1. Is it safe?

No steps were skipped during the clinical trial process for COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccine safety checks are in-progress and will continue as long as a vaccine is available. Vaccine safety is complicated and important, and questions are expected and healthy.

**No steps were skipped during the clinical trial process for COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>1</sup>**

- The FDA authorizes vaccines after they pass three phases of clinical trials.
- These clinical trials require thousands of people and months of data.
- The speed of vaccine development is affected by many different things.
  - One reason is COVID vaccine was available before the end of 2020 is that more money and people went into this vaccine than any vaccine in history.

**Vaccine safety checks are in-progress and will continue as long as a vaccine is available.<sup>2</sup>**

- When a vaccine trial is paused or cancelled, it is normal and means the safety checks are working.<sup>3</sup>
- Vaccine recalls are rare. If a recall is issued, the FDA and CDC will let health officials and the media know immediately.<sup>4</sup>
- After the vaccine is authorized, FDA and CDC will continue to monitor it using federal safety systems that are already in place ([Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#)) as well as new tools ([V-Safe](#)).

**Vaccine safety is complicated and important, and questions are expected and healthy.<sup>5</sup>**

- More information on vaccine safety is available on the CDC, FDA, and DHSS websites.
- Doctors and scientists make safety decisions at the FDA and CDC. They may have training in vaccine science, medicine, and ethics.
- If you have safety questions about vaccines, ask your healthcare provider or visit [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://cdc.gov/vaccines).

**FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)**

**CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

**DHSS – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services [dhss.alaska.gov](http://dhss.alaska.gov)**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/media/139638/download>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/ensuring-safe-vaccines.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/recalls.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

## 2. Is it effective?

A safe and effective COVID vaccine is an important tool for ending the global pandemic. Vaccines can protect individuals in different ways. Vaccines also protect the people around you - including Alaska's healthcare workers and their patients.

**A safe and effective COVID vaccine is an important tool for ending the global pandemic.**<sup>6</sup>

- Vaccines work to protect people by helping the body produce immunity.<sup>7</sup>
- A COVID vaccine must meet standards for effectiveness from the FDA.
- Vaccines have already helped us reduce vaccine preventable diseases in Alaska (such as measles, influenza, and diphtheria).<sup>8</sup>

**Vaccines can protect individuals in different ways.**<sup>7</sup>

- Getting a vaccine might protect you from getting sick.
- Getting a vaccine might help you not get as sick OR stay out of the hospital if you do get sick.
- Protection from vaccines can depend on your age and immune system.
- Protection from vaccines can last anywhere from a few months to your whole life.

**Vaccines also protect the people around you - including Alaska's healthcare workers and their patients.**

- Scientists are using clinical trials to test the COVID vaccine's effectiveness using large groups of people.
- There is not enough information available about the COVID vaccine to know if or when the CDC might change other COVID guidance.

**FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)**

**CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

**ACIP (CDC) – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/)**

**DHSS – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services [dhss.alaska.gov](http://dhss.alaska.gov)**

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/accelerating-a-safe-and-effective-covid-19-vaccine>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/provider-resources-safetysheets.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/VPD.aspx>

### 3. What vaccine will be available?

COVID vaccines began arriving in Alaska in December 2020. The FDA must authorize or approve any vaccine before it is used in the United States. After FDA authorization, the CDC recommends vaccines with help from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

#### COVID vaccines began arriving in Alaska in December 2020.

- Scientists and doctors have been working on vaccines since the beginning of the COVID pandemic.<sup>9</sup>
- As of January 2020, 20 different vaccines from around the world have reached the final stage of testing.<sup>10</sup>
- Each vaccine candidate can have a different number of doses (1 or 2) or storage requirements.

#### The FDA must authorize or approve any vaccine before it is used in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

- The FDA clinical trials test safety and effectiveness in three phases using thousands of volunteers before it is authorized.
  - **Phase I** tests for safety in a small number of people.
  - **Phase II** tests hundreds of people with different characteristics (such as age and health status). This is to understand effectiveness and side effects.
  - **Phase III** tests thousands of people to assess safety and effectiveness.
- The FDA also sets rules for making the vaccine and reporting side effects.

#### After FDA authorization, the CDC recommends vaccines with help from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).<sup>12</sup>

- ACIP is a federal advisory group made up of medical and public health experts.
- ACIP recommendations are reviewed and approved by the CDC Director and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The recommendations are official when the CDC publishes them in a report (MMWR).

*FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)*

*CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)*

*ACIP (CDC) – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/)*

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.covid-19vaccinetracker.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/science/coronavirus-vaccine-tracker.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/files/vaccines,%20blood%20&%20biologics/published/Ensuring-the-Safety-of-Vaccines-in-the-United-States.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

## 4. When will a vaccine be available?

Alaska began COVID vaccinations in mid-December in 2020. Currently, vaccine supply is limited - there are not enough doses for everyone. The ultimate goal is to have a safe and effective vaccine available to all Alaskans who want it.

### **Alaska began COVID vaccinations in mid-December in 2020.**

- Federal planners allocated 114,800 doses to the State of Alaska in December 2020 and January 2021.
- Federal planners decided to send small amounts of vaccine as soon as it is available, instead of waiting until there is unlimited vaccine for anyone who wants it.

### **Currently, vaccine supply is limited - there are not enough doses for everyone.<sup>13</sup>**

- It is understandable to be concerned or curious about vaccine supply, especially when we think about family and friends who are at high risk of getting COVID or getting very sick from COVID.

### **The ultimate goal is to have a safe and effective vaccine available to all Alaskans who want it.<sup>14</sup>**

- Expect regular shipments of vaccine from federal planners to continue throughout 2021.
- The State of Alaska will share updates on vaccine availability within Alaska at [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).<sup>14</sup>
- [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov) is updated regularly to help Alaskans find COVID vaccine in their community.

*FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)*

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

<sup>14</sup> [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov)

## 5. Who will get the vaccine first?

Many different groups of medical and public health experts are thinking about who should get the COVID vaccine while supply is limited. In general, people at high risk of getting exposed to COVID or getting very sick from COVID may be vaccinated first. The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force is working with federal, state, Tribal, military, and community partners to plan for Alaska's needs.

**Many different groups of medical and public health experts are thinking about who should get the COVID vaccine while supply is limited.<sup>15</sup>**

- At the CDC, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) develops recommendations on how to use vaccines to control disease in the United States.
- In Alaska, the Alaska Vaccine Allocation Advisory Committee (AVAAC) develops recommendations on who should get the COVID vaccine in Alaska while supply is limited.
- Expect the Alaska Tribal Health System, U.S. Department of Defense, or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or other organizations to provide their own guidance.

**Keeping the public informed is an important part of the vaccine distribution process.**

- Information on ACIP recommendations, members, and ways to provide feedback is available at the ACIP website.
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/index.html>
- Information on AVAAC recommendations, members, and ways to provide feedback are available on the DHSS website
  - <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/vaccineallocation.aspx#about>

**In general, people at high risk of getting exposed to COVID or getting very sick from COVID may be vaccinated first.**Error! Bookmark not defined.

- Like all vaccine recommendations, COVID vaccine recommendations will change as we learn more.
- Things that change vaccine recommendations include: vaccine effectiveness, level of disease, or number of doses needed.

**CDC** – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**ACIP (CDC)** – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/)

**DHSS** – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services [dhss.alaska.gov](http://dhss.alaska.gov)

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

## 6. Will there be a vaccine mandate?

There are no plans for a State of Alaska COVID-19 vaccine mandate at this time. The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to provide Alaskans with the information they need to make safe and healthy decisions about vaccination. State and Tribal leaders prioritize Alaskans' trust and safety.

**There are no plans for a State of Alaska COVID-19 vaccine mandate at this time.**

- In general, states and employers have the legal authority to require vaccines.<sup>16</sup>
  - The rules for COVID vaccine mandates may be different because it was released under an Emergency Use Authorization.<sup>17</sup>
- In Alaska, vaccine mandates are most often used by employers to protect the health of workers, their patients, or their students.
- For example:
  - a state can mandate vaccines for school children
  - a hospital can mandate vaccinations for employees
  - the military (as an employer) can mandate vaccinations for soldiers and civilian staff

**The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to provide Alaskans with the information they need to make safe and healthy decisions about vaccination.**

- Education and communications resources are available for free at [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).
- The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force considers the needs of different audiences as it develops new communications.
- If you have specific questions about whether a vaccine is right for you, ask your healthcare provider.

**State and Tribal leaders prioritize Alaskans' trust and safety.**

- When a FDA-authorized vaccine is available, some public leaders have shared their stories of getting vaccinated to inspire others to choose vaccination too.
- Alaskans who get a COVID vaccine will be protecting themselves and those around them - including those who can't get the vaccine.
- If you see rumors being spread of a statewide COVID vaccine mandate in Alaska, protect others by sharing official information from [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).

**FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)**

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<sup>16</sup>

<https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/11/20/could-coronavirus-vaccines-become-mandatory/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2774712>

## 7. Who pays for the vaccine?

Resources are needed for the development, distribution, and administration of the COVID vaccine. The CDC has stated that cost will not be an obstacle for the American people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to ensure all Alaskans have access to the COVID vaccine at no charge.

**Resources are needed for development, distribution, and administration of the COVID vaccine.**

- Development costs include researching and manufacturing of the vaccine itself.
- Distribution costs include shipping the vaccine to states, Tribes, and territories.
- Administration costs include giving the vaccine to Alaskans at hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, or other locations.

**The CDC has stated that cost will not be an obstacle for the American people to get vaccinated against COVID-19.<sup>18</sup>**

- Since March of 2020, the U.S. government has funded several different companies to research, develop, and manufacture a vaccine.<sup>19</sup>
- The U.S. government will work with McKesson Corporation to distribute a vaccine and related (ancillary) supplies. The CDC already uses McKesson to distribute childhood and flu vaccinations.<sup>20</sup>
- The CARES Act and other guidance from the U.S. government set more detailed rules for COVID vaccine costs.<sup>21</sup>

**The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to ensure all Alaskans have access to the COVID vaccine at no charge.**

- In general, health care providers are not allowed to bill a patient for the cost of administering the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Your provider may charge your health insurer an administration fee related to the vaccine dose. If you have questions, please reach out to your health insurer or benefits administrator.
- If you are uninsured and a fee is charged by your provider, the fee may be paid by HRSA (Health Resources and Service Administration).<sup>22</sup>

***CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
CARES Act – Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act***

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/8-things.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://medicalcountermeasures.gov/app/barda/coronavirus/COVID19.aspx?filter=vaccine>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/08/14/trump-administration-collaborates-mckesson-covid-19-vaccine-distribution.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr/748/BILLS-116hr748enr.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/CovidUninsuredClaim>

## 8. What is an mRNA vaccine?

Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines teach cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. Our immune system will remember this protein so it can respond later on. mRNA vaccines cannot become a permanent part of the body and they do not contain any virus. Like all vaccines, mRNA vaccines give us more protection, but without the risks of getting sick from a disease.

**Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines teach cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies.<sup>23</sup>**

- First, our cells use instructions (mRNA) from the vaccine to build a piece of the spike protein.
- Second, our immune system learns how to recognize and respond to the piece of the spike protein - just like it would during a COVID infection. Note that the real COVID virus has a spike protein on its surface that it uses to get into cells.
- Finally, our immune system will remember this response so it is ready to protect you from future infections from the real virus.

**mRNA vaccines cannot become a permanent part of the body and do not contain any virus.<sup>23</sup>**

- mRNA does not enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept.
- The cell breaks down and gets rid of the mRNA soon after it is finished using the instructions.
- It is impossible to get COVID-19 from the vaccines because none of the mRNA vaccines contain the virus that causes the infection.

**Like all vaccines, mRNA vaccines give us more protection, but without the risks of getting sick from a disease.**

- mRNA vaccines are a new technology, but they must meet the same safety and effectiveness standards as all other types of vaccines in the United States.<sup>24</sup>
- The expected common side effects of mRNA vaccines are from your immune system building immunity (protection) against a disease.
- If you have safety questions about vaccines, ask your healthcare provider or visit [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/media/139638/download>

## 9. Who participated in vaccine clinical trials?

Thousands of non-pregnant adult volunteers have already completed COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. Many researchers agree that it is important for people who are in clinical trials to represent the populations who will receive the vaccine. COVID vaccine clinical trial participation is always voluntary, and individuals and communities make decisions for different reasons.

**Thousands of non-pregnant adult volunteers have already completed COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials.**

- Each COVID vaccine goes through at least three phases of FDA clinical trials.<sup>25</sup>
- As of November 21, over 100,000 people have participated in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials in the United States.<sup>26</sup>
- Initially, COVID-19 vaccines may not be recommended for pregnant women or children. Expect vaccine recommendations to change as more people participate.

**Many researchers agree that it is important for people who are in clinical trials to represent the populations who will receive the vaccine.**

- Certain racial and ethnic groups, people over age 65, and people with underlying medical conditions were recruited for clinical trials because they have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- Because Phase 3 trials test the vaccine in a much larger, more diverse group of people, they also find less common side effects and confirm it is safe and works well for different groups of people.
- Expect vaccine manufacturers, the FDA, and the CDC to publish more details on who participated in each clinical trial on their websites, including breakdowns on gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc.<sup>27</sup>

**COVID vaccine clinical trial participation is always voluntary, and individuals and communities make decisions for different reasons.**

- Some people choose not to participate in clinical trials due to a lack of trust in medical research – or for other reasons.
- Some people might choose to participate in clinical trials as a way of helping end the pandemic – or for other reasons.
- For more information on vaccine testing programs or how you could participate, visit the National Institute of Health website [www.preventcovid.org](http://www.preventcovid.org).

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/media/139638/download>

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Jay Butler: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWpC7Y5WSws>

<sup>27</sup> Example: [https://www.modernatx.com/sites/default/files/content\\_documents/2020-COVE-Study-Enrollment-Completion-10.22.20.pdf](https://www.modernatx.com/sites/default/files/content_documents/2020-COVE-Study-Enrollment-Completion-10.22.20.pdf)

## 10. What are the side effects of COVID vaccines?

Vaccine side effects – and questions about side effects – are normal and expected. Many people report mild side effects after COVID-19 vaccination, like pain or swelling at the injection site, or a headache, chills, or fever. Alaska’s health care workers take actions to keep Alaskans safe before, during, and after COVID vaccine is given.

**Vaccine side effects – and questions about side effects – are normal and expected.**

- Vaccine side effects show that your body is building an appropriate immune response.
- Vaccine adverse events include true reactions to the vaccine (like allergic reactions), side effects, or unrelated health problems.<sup>28</sup>
- The CDC has safeguards in place to monitor and respond to vaccine adverse events.<sup>29</sup>

**Many people report mild side effects after COVID-19 vaccination, like pain or swelling at the injection site, or a headache, chills, or fever.<sup>30</sup>**

- These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.<sup>31</sup>
- If you have specific questions about COVID vaccine safety, ask your healthcare provider or look for information from the CDC. For example:
  - [What to Expect After Getting a COVID Vaccine](#) (CDC)
  - [COVID-19 Vaccines and Allergic Reactions](#) (CDC)

**Alaska’s health care workers take actions to keep Alaskans safe before, during, and after COVID vaccine is given.<sup>32</sup>**

- **BEFORE:** Alaska’s health care workers are ready to give the vaccine safely.
- **DURING:** Health care workers observe you 15-30 minutes following vaccination so they can provide care if you need it.
- **AFTER:** Alaska’s health care workers report adverse events to a CDC and FDA system.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/ensuringsafety/sideeffects/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

<sup>32</sup> [http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2020/DHSS\\_PressRelease\\_C19Vaccine\\_20201221.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2020/DHSS_PressRelease_C19Vaccine_20201221.pdf)

## 11. What are the ingredients in the COVID vaccine?

The mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna contain four types of ingredients: mRNA, lipids, salts, sugars.<sup>33</sup> The Johnson & Johnson Janssen viral vector vaccine includes adenovirus type 26 (Ad26), stabilizers, and manufacturing by-products.<sup>34</sup> If you have more questions about vaccine ingredients, talking with your healthcare provider may help you make an informed decision.

**The mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna contain four types of ingredients: mRNA, lipids, salts, sugars.**

- mRNA – teaches your immune system to build a spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 and defend against it.
- Lipids - to protect the mRNA, so that it does not break down before it gets into our cells.
- Salts - to keep the pH of the vaccine similar to that found in the body, so that the vaccine does not damage cells when it is administered.
- Sugar – to prevent the lipids from sticking to each other or to the sides of the vaccine vial.

**The Johnson & Johnson Janssen viral vector vaccine have three types of ingredients: adenovirus type 26 (Ad26), stabilizers, and manufacturing by-products.**

- Ad26 contains the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein gene in an altered form so it cannot replicate and cannot change your DNA.
- Stabilizers include salts, alcohols, polysorbate 80, and hydrochloric acid.
- Manufacturing by-products include amino acids.

**If you have more questions about vaccine ingredients, talking with your healthcare provider may help you make an informed decision.**

- The COVID-19 vaccines do not include the following: animal products, pork products, antibiotics, egg, microchips, preservatives (like thimerosal), soy, gluten, or latex.<sup>35,36,37,38</sup>
  - It is normal and healthy to have questions about vaccine ingredients.
  - Protect Alaskans from misinformation by sharing information from the CDC or [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).

**FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)**

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/making-vaccines/prevent-covid>

<sup>34</sup> [Questions and Answers about COVID-19 Vaccines | Children's Hospital of Philadelphia \(chop.edu\)](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Questions and Answers about COVID-19 Vaccines | Children's Hospital of Philadelphia \(chop.edu\)](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Information About Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Information about the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)

## 12. If I am vaccinated, what will change for me?

It takes time for the vaccine to protect you from the virus. Once you are fully vaccinated you can see more people. Even when you are fully vaccinated, you should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations.

### **It takes time for the vaccine to protect you from the virus.**

- You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after your second dose of vaccine for the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or two weeks after your dose of the Janssen vaccine.
- It is important to limit your potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus while building immunity.
- It is still possible to get infected after vaccination, but the chances of a severe infection, hospitalization, and death are much lower.

### **Once you are fully vaccinated you can see more people.<sup>39</sup>**

- You can gather indoors with other fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household without masks, unless anyone in the household has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine or get tested unless you have symptoms.

### **Even when you are fully vaccinated, you should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations.<sup>40,41</sup>**

- Wearing a mask, distancing, avoiding crowds when in public, and limiting gatherings helps keep you and others safe.
- The more Alaskans are vaccinated, the slower the virus can spread.
- We need to continue mitigation measures while others are being vaccinated to build community immunity.

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<sup>39</sup> [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC](#)

<sup>41</sup> [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#)

## 13. If I am pregnant or breastfeeding, can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Alaskans who are pregnant or breastfeeding may choose to be vaccinated. Early data from the v-safe Vaccine Pregnancy Registry do not indicate safety concerns from COVID-19 vaccination. Pregnant people are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to pregnant people or breastfed babies.

**Alaskans who are pregnant or breastfeeding may choose to be vaccinated.**<sup>42</sup>

- If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccination, talking to your healthcare provider may help you make an informed decision but is not required.
- You do not need to take a pregnancy test before getting the vaccine.
- Providers should not withhold vaccine from people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.<sup>43</sup>

**Early data from the v-safe Vaccine Pregnancy Registry do not indicate safety concerns from COVID-19 vaccination.**<sup>44</sup>

- COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials did not include pregnant or breastfeeding people.
- Pregnant individuals are encouraged to sign up for the v-safe Vaccine Pregnancy Registry.<sup>45</sup>
- There were no differences in adverse outcomes between pregnant people participating in the v-safe Vaccine Pregnancy Registry with background rates of adverse pregnancy outcomes.<sup>46</sup>

**Pregnant people are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.**<sup>47,48,49</sup>

- COVID-19 may increase the risk of unhealthy pregnancy outcomes for babies, including being born too early.
- Over 30,000 pregnant people in the United States have already chosen to be vaccinated.

**COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to pregnant people or breastfed babies.**

- None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain live virus. Vaccines that have live viruses are not recommended during pregnancy.<sup>50</sup>
- COVID-19 vaccines cannot infect people with the COVID-19 virus. There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>42</sup> [Vaccination Site Recommendations for Pregnant Individuals | ACOG](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)

<sup>44</sup> [CDC Presentation](#)

<sup>45</sup> [v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19 | ACOG](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Certain Medical Conditions and Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness | CDC](#)

<sup>48</sup> [Update: Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status — United States, January 22–October 3, 2020 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

<sup>49</sup> [Pregnancy Outcomes Among Women With and Without Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 Infection | Infectious Diseases | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network](#)

<sup>50</sup> [Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)