

COVID-19 Vaccine Common Questions

It's normal to have questions. While many Alaskans are ready to get immunized against COVID-19, others may still have questions. Here are some answers to common questions.



How can I be sure the long-term side effects of the vaccine won't be worse than having COVID-19?

The threat of COVID-19 is real and urgent, and the benefits of getting vaccinated far outweigh the risks. Getting immunized will help keep you, your family, and your community stay healthy and safe, and will allow for the full reopening of the economy. COVID-19 can present long-term health risks for people who get the illness.



Which vaccine should I take?

All of the vaccines available have been authorized by the FDA and have been proven to be safe and effective. Getting vaccinated with any of the available vaccines will greatly reduce your risk of serious illness due to the virus. All available vaccines do a good job preventing moderate COVID-19 disease, and do an especially good job of reducing the risks for hospitalization and death. Most vaccination sites will be using only one vaccine type, so you will not get to select which vaccine you are given. Whichever vaccine you receive will greatly reduce your health risk.



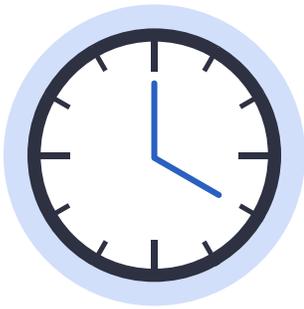
How long does it take for the vaccine to provide immunity?

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine reaches peak effectiveness four weeks after its single dose, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reaches peak effectiveness one week after the second dose, and the Moderna vaccine reaches peak effectiveness two weeks after the second dose. All three vaccines begin to protect you soon after being administered, including with the first dose. While vaccines must be highly effective to be approved for use, no vaccine provides 100% immunity so we should continue taking precautions like wearing a mask, social distancing, and frequently washing your hands until enough people are vaccinated to stop the spread of the virus. This is especially important to protect your family and friends as they wait to get their vaccine.



Why should I trust that the vaccine is safe?

The vaccines made available to you were proven safe and effective. Though progress happened quickly, no steps were skipped during the clinical trial process. Clinical trials included thousands of people. Every study and every phase of every trial was carefully reviewed and approved by a safety board and the FDA decided the benefits outweigh any risks. The process was transparent and rigorous, with ongoing oversight and expert approval. Vaccine safety checks are in progress and will continue as long as a vaccine is available.



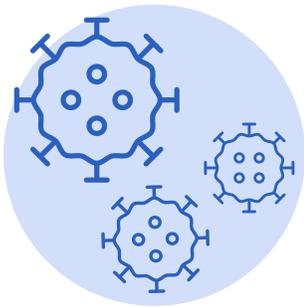
How were vaccines developed so quickly?

These vaccines were developed quickly because of a never-before-seen level of scientific investment and cooperation. Experts around the world have moved their focus to developing vaccines that will end the pandemic. Even though the progress was fast, no steps were skipped in the process.



Am I permanently immune after getting vaccinated?

Because this is a new virus and these are new vaccines, we don't yet know how long immunity will last and whether additional doses will be needed, as they are for the flu. The FDA and the scientists and health and medical experts who developed the vaccines are continuing to study the virus and vaccines closely to understand how long immunity lasts and how well the vaccines protect against new mutations of the virus. While vaccines must be highly effective to be approved for use, no vaccine provides 100% immunity so it's important to continue taking precautions.



I already had COVID-19, why do I still need the vaccine?

Not enough is yet known about how long immunity from natural COVID-19 illness might last and protect you from becoming re-infected and spreading the illness to others. For that reason, even if you have already been infected, vaccination is an important step to protect yourself and those around you.

Ready to get immunized against COVID-19? Make your appointment:

Call **1-907-646-3322** from 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekends.

Or, visit <http://covidvax.alaska.gov> to make your appointment online.

