

Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 Vaccine

Q: Is there a COVID-19 vaccine?

A: In the United States, there is currently no authorized or approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19. **Operation Warp Speed** is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense to help develop, produce, and distribute millions of vaccine doses for COVID-19 as quickly as possible while ensuring that vaccines are safe and effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is focused on vaccine planning, working closely with the Ohio Department of Health and other state partners to prepare for vaccination availability.

Q: Why is a COVID-19 vaccine needed if social distancing and wearing masks prevent COVID-19 virus from spreading?

A: Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines boost your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like masks and social distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to or spreading the virus. Together, the coming COVID-19 vaccinations and proper prevention measures will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Q: How many COVID-19 vaccines are under development?

A: Multiple COVID-19 vaccines are under development. As of October 13, 2020, four vaccines have begun large-scale (phase 3) clinical trials.

Q: How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?

A: All but one of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in (phase 3) clinical trials in the United States, requires two doses. The other COVID-19 vaccine uses one dose.

Q: How will I know that the COVID -19 vaccine is safe?

A: The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make the COVID-19 vaccine available. Clinical trials are studying the effectiveness of the vaccine in thousands of study participants. Data from these trials will be provided to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine vaccine safety and effectiveness. The FDA uses rigorous standards during the evaluation and if it determines that a vaccine meets its safety and effectiveness requirements, it can make these available by approval or emergency use authorization. After FDA makes its determination, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will review available data before making vaccine recommendations to CDC.

Q: Will, my children, be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Once a vaccine is available, there will be guidance on who should receive it. The bottom line is that Ohioans should be able to obtain safe, effective vaccines for themselves and their families if they choose according to manufacturers' guidelines once it is widely available.

Q: Who is paying for the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: The federal government is committed to providing free or low-cost COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccine doses purchased with taxpayer dollars will be given to Ohioans who choose to receive them at no cost.

Q: Will there be enough vaccine for everyone in Ohio?

A: When FDA first authorizes or approves the use of one or more COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, there may be a limited supply. This would mean that not everyone will be able to be vaccinated right away but, in time, as vaccination production ramps up, every Ohioan who chooses may receive a vaccine as soon as large quantities are available.

Q: Are there special considerations on who will receive the COVID-19 first in Ohio?

A: At first, there may be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. Operation Warp speed will work to get those first vaccine doses out once a vaccine is authorized, approved, and recommended, rather than waiting until there are enough vaccines for everyone. However, it is important that the initial vaccines are given to people in a fair, ethical, and transparent way. Those who are at highest risk of contracting and transmitting the virus will be among the first to be able to access vaccination. Once the vaccine is widely available, Ohio intends to have an orderly system that for distributing the vaccine to anyone who chooses to receive it.

Q: If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available?

A: Not enough is known about how long natural immunity lasts for those that have recovered from the virus. Until we have a vaccine available and know more about natural immunity to COVID-19, the CDC will not comment on whether people who had COVID-19 should get a COVID-19 vaccine. (ACIP) will make recommendations to CDC on who should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Can other vaccines help prevent me from getting COVID-19?

A: There are currently no vaccines that will prevent COVID-19. However, multiple agencies and groups in the United States are working together to ensure that a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is available as quickly as possible. A flu vaccine will not prevent you from getting COVID-19, but it can prevent you from getting influenza (flu) at the same time as COVID-19. While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the fall and winter, CDC believes it's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading during this time. That means that getting a flu vaccine will be more crucial than ever.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Q: Pfizer and BioNTech announced that their vaccine candidate was 90% effective in preventing COVID-19? What does that mean?

A: The vaccine candidate (in the first interim efficacy analysis) was found to be more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in participants without evidence of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection at seven days following the second dose of vaccine.

- The analysis evaluated 94 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in nearly 44,000 trial participants.
- No serious safety concerns were observed. Safety and additional efficacy data continue to be collected.
- Pfizer and BioNTech will likely apply for Emergency Use Authorization in the third week of November after collecting two months of safety data required by the FDA. The FDA will then meet with an outside advisory board to review detailed data about vaccine safety, effectiveness, and the companies' ability to safely manufacture millions of vaccine doses.

Source: Pfizer and BioNTech; The New York Times