

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

The following FAQs have stemmed from questions regarding the vaccine itself, its safety and effectiveness. For information regarding eligibility and how to sign up for the vaccine, please scroll towards the second part of this document.

Q: Is the vaccine free? How is the vaccine being paid for?

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund.

Q: Is one vaccine better than another?

No, all vaccines will produce the same results. They have completed clinical trials and have data which demonstrate the vaccines are safe and effective. The FDA and CDC review the data thoroughly before granting an Emergency Use Authorization.

Q: How many doses are needed, and why?

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses - Pfizer 21 days apart, Moderna 28 days apart. Johnson and Johnson requires only one. A majority of COVID-19 vaccines in clinical trials require two doses. The first dose primes the immune system, helping it recognize the virus. The second dose strengthens the immune response. Receiving both doses will provide the best protection against COVID-19.

Q: How safe is the vaccine?

The FDA carefully reviews all safety data from clinical trials and authorizes emergency vaccine use only when the expected benefits outweigh potential risks. Then, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) reviews all safety data. The FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, to make sure even very rare side effects are identified. Any approved vaccines will have undergone the same level of safety protocol as previous vaccines.

Q: How can I trust a "rushed" vaccine?

Unfortunately, the name "Operation Warp Speed" gives the impression that clinical trials were rushed. However, other vaccines have been approved with similar Phase III clinical trial timelines. In comparison, the Shingles vaccine was studied for 13 months, the Hepatitis-B vaccine was studied for 6.5 months and COVID-19 trials have 6+ months of clinical data.

Q: Is the COVID-19 vaccine a “live” vaccine?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain a live virus or carry a risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person. mRNA technology has been studied and researched for years. To learn more about how mRNA vaccines work, read what the CDC has to say [here](#).

Q: If I have had COVID-19, should I still get vaccinated?

Yes. Evidence has demonstrated evidence of reinfection, so you should consider getting vaccinated.

Q: Is it better to get natural immunity to COVID-19 (by getting sick & getting better) or getting my immunity from the vaccine?

It is unknown how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. However, COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

Q: Will the vaccine cause me to test positive for COVID-19 on a test?

No, the vaccine will not cause you to test positive on viral tests for COVID-19. (Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results, as the vaccine works to induce antibodies to protect you.)

Q: Does the vaccine interfere with my DNA?

No. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nuclei of our cells, 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 “messenger” instructions.

Q: Will the COVID-19 vaccine cause me to feel unwell for a few days?

Fever is a potential side effect and your arm may be sore, red or warm to the touch. Symptoms typically go away on their own within a week. Side effects are a sign that the immune system is working.

Q: How will side effects be tracked?

You or your healthcare provider may submit side effects and adverse events to **VAERS** – Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. Report mild side effects to your primary care provider. For severe side effects, report to the nearest emergency department or call 911. You will also be able to use **VSAFE** – A smartphone-based tool that checks in with patients to ask about side-effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Now that I have received the vaccine, I am ok to not wear a mask, right?

This is incorrect. When you receive the first shot you do not become immediately immune and it takes a few days for your body to start developing antibodies. Please continue wearing a mask, social distancing, avoiding large gatherings and washing your hands often.

Q: Now that there is a vaccine, will COVID go away soon?

Though we wish we could say this is true, unfortunately things will not go back to how they were before COVID just yet. To achieve herd immunity, about 70 percent or more of the population will need to be vaccinated first. Though this will take time, we are hopeful that with a vaccine and community members continuing to do their active role to stop the spread, that the light at the end of the tunnel gets brighter and brighter.

COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility FAQs

We know that many people are hopeful to receive a COVID vaccination soon and have questions. When will the vaccine be available? When will I be eligible? We know it's frustrating to wait for these important details. Please know we will share information as soon as it is available.

Q: Who is eligible for the vaccine now?

A: Beginning March 29, all Kansans ages 16 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan.

For more information about the vaccine registration and local COVID-19 information, [visit the Douglas County Coronavirus Response and Recovery Hub](#).

How will I know it's my turn to get the vaccine?

Q: How will people be notified as to when they can receive the vaccine? Do we have to contact the provider to make an appointment or will there just be an announcement that the vaccine is available?

A: Registration for all clinics at the Douglas County Fairgrounds is open to the public and registration codes will be posted at LDCHHealth.org/COVIDVaccine and Douglascountyks.org/coronavirus. You can visit lmh.org/vaccine and watch LMH Health's social media channels for the latest information.

Q: Are local pharmacies also vaccinating residents?

A: Yes, some pharmacies in Douglas County are designated to receive and administer COVID-19 vaccines as part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program. To receive vaccines through these pharmacies, you will need to contact them directly to learn about eligibility and sign up for an appointment.

Those providing vaccines in Douglas County are:

- Dillons
- Hy-Vee
- Medical Arts Pharmacy
- Orchards Drug Pharmacy
- Sigler Pharmacy
- Walgreens
- Walmart

I got the call it is my turn to receive the vaccine, now what?

Q: I have an appointment to get the vaccine but need to reschedule. Can I do this?

A: If you were chosen to receive your vaccine and contacted but cannot make it, please call the Douglas County COVID Helpline at 785-864-9000 and they will be able to assist you.

Q: I submitted the form, but received my vaccine elsewhere. What do I cancel my appointment?

A: The state/country does not have a central database of who has been vaccinated and where, therefore, there is a chance they will be contacted for first dose even after they have already received one.

In this case, you will need to inform the caller that you have already received a dose when they call you that you are next to receive the vaccine. The first dose and second doses of the vaccine **MUST** be completed by the same organization. For example, if the patient receives their first dose with the Health Department and receives a call from LMH Health to get a dose, the patient cannot go to LMH Health for their second dose. They **MUST** return to the Health Department to receive the second dose.

Updated 04/13/2021