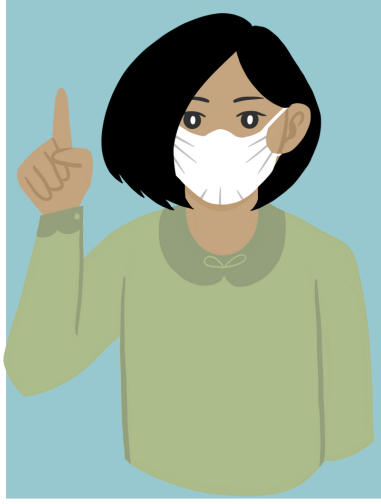
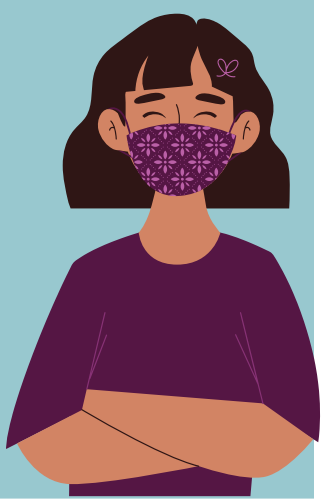
COVID-19

VACCINES

FAQS





How does the vaccine work?

When germs, such as the virus that causes COVID-19, invade our bodies, they attack and multiply. This invasion, called an infection, is what causes illness. Our immune system uses several tools to fight infection.

The first time a person is infected with any virus it can take several days or weeks for their body to make and use all the germ-fighting tools needed to get over the infection but then the immune system remembers what it learned about how to protect the body against that disease.

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus without us having to get the illness. So even in the rare chance that you do get the infection even after vaccination then you will have a milder infection.

It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.

That means it is possible a person could still get COVID-19 before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to build protection. Sometimes after vaccination, the process of building immunity can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are signs that the body is building immunity.

What are the types of vaccines?

Currently, there are three main types of COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized and recommended or undergoing large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials. These create an immune response in our bodies towards different parts of the virus. Depending on what they target, the vaccines are known as mRNA vaccine, vector vaccine, protein subunit vaccine.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines, while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a viral vector vaccine. The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine (known as Covishield in India) creates immunity against the spike protein on the outer layer of the virus. Sputnik V or Gam-COVID-Vac also creates immunity against the spike protein. Covaxin is an inactivated viral vaccine. This is similar to vaccines we have all had in the past for polio, rabies, flu among others. Sinovac is similar.

How some of the Covid-19 vaccines compare

Company	Type	Doses	How effective*	Storage	Cost per dose
Oxford Uni-AstraZeneca	Viral vector (genetically modified virus)	x2	62-90%	Regular fridge temperature	£3 ($4)
Moderna	RNA (part of virus genetic code)	x2	95%	-20C up to 6 months	£25 ($33)
Pfizer-BioNTech	RNA	x2	95%	-70C	£15 ($20)
Gamaleya (Sputnik V)	Viral vector	x2	92%	Regular fridge temperature (in dry form)	£7.50 ($10)

*preliminary phase three results, not yet peer-reviewed

Source: Respective companies, WHO

BBC

Is it safe to take the vaccine?

All experimental vaccines undergo rigorous testing in preclinical studies and clinical trials. These are designed to assess the safety of the vaccine and how well it fares at preventing disease. In addition scientists also look at how many people develop side effects in the group who had an experimental vaccine and comparing this with the side effects in the group who had the placebo to determine how safe the vaccine is.
For example, 84.7% of people who received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine during clinical trials reported at least one side effect at the injection site. The most common side effect was pain, which was relieved by medication and did not last beyond a day.

How effective is the vaccine in preventing me from getting Covid 19 infection?

During clinical trial, scientists work out how well an experimental vaccine works by comparing how many people in the treatment group develop the disease with how many people in unvaccinated population develop the disease. This is called vaccine efficacy, and it describes the percentage reduction in disease in the clinical trial. For example, researchers have reported an efficacy of 94.1% for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.
But we should keep in mind that vaccine efficacy is just a statistical measurement of short-term performance of the vaccine. It cannot guarantee the durability of the vaccine beyond the time frame of experimentation, which is only a few months in these cases.

Will I get Covid because of the vaccine?

No.

None of vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test?

No.

None of the vaccines can cause you to test positive on RT-PCR tests which are used to see if you have a **current infection**.

The nasal swab looks for the actual virus and detects genetic material from the virus itself. So the vaccine cannot make that test show positive unless you have got the virus in your nose from a contact few days before the vaccine or before the vaccine takes full effect.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, you should because experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. It is possible—although rare—that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again.
If you were treated for COVID-19 then talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received

Will I get dangerous side effects due to the vaccine?

Some rare instances of blood clots have been found in people who have had the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. These patients were found to have a particular antibody in their blood that activates platelets. This antibody causes the platelets to mistakenly clump together and form clots, and in turn activates other parts of the body's clotting system. Most cases have been seen between four days and a few weeks of people having the vaccine.

According to the UK medical regulator, out of 20 million doses, 79 cases have been identified, and 19 people have died. In India out of 61 million vaccinated 173 have died but there is no direct cause and effect relation proved so far.

To put this in perspective, in 2019, 151113 people died in road accidents in India. Assuming that all of the 1.3 billion people of this country are out on the road and exposed to a road accident, this is still 37 seven times more number of people.

What is the normal reaction after vaccine?

Side Effects	How to Manage
Pain, redness, swelling at the injection site	Paracetamol 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours as needed
Fever, chills	
Headache, muscle pain, joint pain	
Tiredness	Rest
Lymph node swelling at neck or arms	Usually gets better by itself in a week or so

There is shortage of vaccine. If my second dose is delayed is it ineffective?

A new study provides reassurance that a longer gap between the first and second doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine will not compromise a person's immune response. A gap of up to 45 weeks actually led to a stronger immune response compared with the recommended interval.A "booster" jab more than 6 months after the second dose further strengthened immunity, including against existing variants.

If I'm pregnant, can I get a vaccine?

Yes. Available data suggest that pregnant patients with COVID-19 are at increased risk of more severe illness compared with nonpregnant ones. So if you can get the vaccine you should.

Will the vaccine affect my periods?

As of now there is no research or data to say that it will or will not affect. Sometimes stressful situations can also affect the periods. But as of now we do not think there is any reason to believe that taking the vaccine can have any harmful effects on the period.

Is it compulsory to get a vaccine? If I have diabetes, high blood pressure should I get a vaccine?

Ideally yes because these conditions are co-morbidities that can increase the risk of severe illness if you do get Covid 19 infection.

Why don't we know whether Covid vaccines prevent infection and transmission?

The trials testing the vaccines weren't set up to answer those questions first. Rather, they were designed to initially determine the more urgent matter of whether vaccines would prevent people from getting sick and overwhelming medical systems.

If I have had covid and fully recovered should I still get the vaccine?

Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. That's because experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible—although rare—that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again.

Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19. Learn more about why getting vaccinated is a safer way to build protection than getting infected.
If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

How long does the protection from the vaccine work?

We don't know how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that 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.
Remember that as per the recommended immunization protocol in most countries in Asia ALL children receive as many as 16 vaccines (BCG, OPV, DPT, TT, Hep B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Chicken pox, HPV etc) and this averts millions of deaths!

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