

# Do You Have Questions About the **COVID-19 Vaccine?**

We have collected a list of the most frequently asked questions from people about to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Don't see your question listed? Visit [www.phila.gov/covid-19](http://www.phila.gov/covid-19) for more FAQs and updates.

## **How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?**

The COVID-19 vaccine is a medicine that helps your immune system fight the COVID-19 virus. It comes in the form of two injections.

1. The first injection primes your immune system, helping it recognize the virus.
2. The second injection strengthens your immune response. After receiving both injections, the vaccine will greatly reduce your chances of getting sick.

The interval between the two doses is 21-28 days, depending on the vaccine brand.

## **Are you injecting the virus?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccine contains incomplete pieces of the COVID-19 virus. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain live COVID-19 virus.

## **Are these COVID-19 vaccines safe in pregnancy?**

In animal tests, these vaccines did not cause problems with pregnancy. Other vaccines are recommended in pregnancy, and it is likely the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will also be safe. The trials did not enroll pregnant individuals, although a few did become pregnant. Since then, many pregnant individuals have chosen to receive the vaccine. We hope to have more information about them and their babies soon.

## **If I am pregnant, should I receive the COVID-19 vaccines?**

This is an individual decision. It may be helpful to discuss with your doctor. If pregnant individuals get COVID-19, they have a higher risk of getting very sick and having premature birth. When making the decision, it is important to weigh your risk of getting COVID-19 against the unknown risk of the vaccine.

## **If I am breastfeeding, should I receive the COVID-19 vaccines?**

Experts think that it is most likely safe. Based on science, the vaccines are thought to be harmless to the breastfeeding baby. If a small bit of vaccine gets into breastmilk, it will go into the baby's stomach and be digested. It is also possible that protective antibodies against COVID-19 could be passed to the baby through breastmilk. However, more studies are needed since breastfeeding individuals were not included in the vaccine trials.

## **If I am trying to get pregnant, should I receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Based on the science we know, COVID-19 vaccines are not thought to affect the ability to get pregnant. If you have the opportunity to be vaccinated before you get pregnant, this will give you protection from COVID-19 during your pregnancy.

## **What are the potential side-effects?**

Potential short-term side effects include a sore arm, general muscle aches, headache, fatigue, chills, and fever. These side effects are signals that your immune system is working.

## **Do I still need to wear a mask and social distance after getting vaccinated?**

Yes. We must continue to try and stop the spread of the virus. Please continue to wear a mask and social distance until most people have the vaccine.

## **Do I need the vaccine if I had COVID-19?**

Yes. We do not know how long someone is protected after getting COVID-19, and so recommend getting the vaccine. However, getting infected again within 90 days is uncommon, so if you had a recent COVID-19 infection you can delay vaccination until the end of this period or get the vaccine as soon as you have been cleared from isolation.

