

## **BENEFITS SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH:**

### **COVID-19 Vaccines**

As you know, the COVID-19 vaccine is a critical component in helping us fight the virus. In addition, it will also help keep our communities safe as we return to normal activities with friends, families and coworkers. Even though there is still so much uncertainty around COVID-19, significant progress has been made with regards to vaccines. Below are some frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and what you need to know going forward.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency use authorization to three vaccines for use in the prevention of COVID-19. Those three vaccines are the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, the Moderna mRNA-1273 vaccine and the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine.

While we wait for the vaccine distribution for all ages, please remember the importance of continuing to wear a mask, wash your hands and watch your distance. The vaccine and our continued vigilance are our best defense against COVID-19. Each state has its own plan for deciding which groups of people will be vaccinated first. You can contact your state health department for more information on its plan for COVID-19 vaccination.

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#### **Are the COVID-19 Vaccines safe?**

According to the CDC, Covid-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>.

#### **What are the known side effects of the Covid-19 Vaccines?**

Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated. Your arm may be sore, red or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Some people report getting a headache or fever when getting a vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It is working and building up protection to disease. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>.

#### **How do I get a vaccine?**

The CDC makes recommendations for who should get the vaccine first, then each state makes its own plan. You can get the most up-to-date information regarding your state's distribution plan by visiting <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>, scrolling down to the box titled "How Do I Get a Vaccine" and choosing your state from the drop down menu.

#### **How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?**

With both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, you will need 2 shots to get the highest level of protection. The timing between your first and second shot depends on which vaccine you received. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is administered in a single dose.

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

Yes, you should get vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. That is 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. 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.

**Benefits at work  
for you!**

The vaccine supply will increase in the months ahead and many other vaccines are still being developed. Please be sure to contact your health care provider or medical plan for further questions.

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