General COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

What can I do to prevent getting COVID-19 until I can get the vaccine?
Practice social distancing, wear a mask when around others, wash your hands, avoid being around others who are sick, avoid crowds, and avoid poorly ventilated spaces. For more information about protecting yourself and others visit the CDC website.

What can I do if I need transportation to receive my vaccine?
Tennessee seniors who need transportation assistance to receive COVID-19 vaccination may learn about services offered by the Tennessee Association of Human Resource Agencies at https://tnhra.org/services/transportation/.

Why should I consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine?
Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the best and safest way to become immune to COVID-19. Getting the vaccine will help your immune system build protection against the virus in case you are exposed in the future. Even though catching the virus may be another way to build protection, this is dangerous because you could get very sick or even die. You can also spread the virus to others when you are sick. The COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19 and are a safe way to become protected from the virus.

Is there a charge to receive the COVID-19 vaccine? What if I don’t have insurance?
Tennesseans will receive the vaccine at no cost. However, your vaccination provider may submit charges to your insurance provider for administration fees. If you do not have insurance, there are other options for your vaccination provider to recover the administration fees from the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Provider Relief Fund.

If I tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, do I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people who have already been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 90 days may choose to delay getting the vaccine because getting sick with COVID-19 again is unlikely during that time. However, there is no harm in getting the vaccine if you have already had COVID-19. You may also choose to wait to get the vaccine in order to allow those who are more high-risk to be vaccinated.
If the vaccine is a two-dose vaccine, how will I know when to get the second dose? When you receive the vaccine, you will receive a card with the date of your first dose, the name/manufacturer of the vaccine received and the date on which you should receive your second dose. Your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine must be from the same product name/manufacturer as the first dose. We recommend when you receive your card, take a picture as a back-up, add the date to your calendar, and download the V-safe app. The V-safe app can remind you when it’s time to receive your second dose.

- If I cannot receive the 2nd dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at the correct time, how many days after can the dose be given? The second dose should occur as close as possible to 21 days for Pfizer and 28 days for Moderna, but could be administered up to 6 weeks from the first dose.

- How long do I have to wait between receiving the flu vaccine (or any other vaccine) and the COVID-19 vaccine? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the COVID-19 vaccine should be given alone with a minimum time of 14 days before or after any other vaccines. If the COVID-19 vaccine is given within 14 days of another vaccine by mistake, doses do not need to be repeated for either vaccine.

After I receive the COVID-19 vaccine, do I need to continue wearing a mask? Yes. Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. Experts don’t yet know whether getting a COVID-19 vaccine will prevent you from spreading the virus that causes COVID to other people even if you are not sick yourself. With new variants rapidly growing and limited data on these variants, multiple mitigation strategies are essential. These strategies
include getting vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, avoid poorly ventilated spaces and washing hands often.

**Do I need to quarantine after exposure to a case even after I’ve been fully vaccinated?**
This guidance is ever-evolving as the CDC receives data from individuals who are fully vaccinated. At this time, vaccinated persons with exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- Are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series.
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure
  - Persons who do not meet all 3 of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

[https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html)

**If I get symptoms shortly after I’ve been vaccinated, should I get tested?**
If you have symptoms shortly after receiving the vaccine, these symptoms do not mean you have developed COVID-19 from the vaccine. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may feel like flu and may even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. For more information about symptoms after receiving the vaccine you can view the CDC’s What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine fact sheet.

- I have heard the Pfizer vaccine is not recommended for children under the age of 16 and the Moderna and J&J vaccines are not recommended for children under the age of 18. Will children have the option to be vaccinated?
  The FDA has issued emergency use authorization for Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J COVID-19 vaccines, but there are other COVID-19 vaccines in development. A clear timeframe is not known at this time for when children will be recommended to get the vaccine. Pfizer added children under the age of 16 to their clinical trials in November, so we hope to learn more about this sometime next year as clinical trials progress.

- If my child is 16 or 17 years of age, what vaccine can they receive?
  Individuals aged 16 and 17 can receive the Pfizer vaccine. The Moderna and J&J vaccines are not approved for anyone under the age of 18. The Pfizer vaccine is a two-dose vaccine, and it’s important to receive the second dose for maximum protection against the COVID-19 virus. For a list of locations vaccinating with the Pfizer vaccine, visit the VaccineFinder.org webpage. Under ‘VACCINES’ click the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID Vaccine, add your zip code and click search.
**I received my first dose in another state and now I am back in Tennessee, can I receive my second dose in Tennessee?**

Yes, you will need to make an appointment for your second dose through your local health department. It is also important that the second dose is the same type/manufacturer as you received the first time. Bring your vaccination card with you to your appointment for the 2nd dose.

**What if I don’t have my card or proof of my first dose?**

You will be vaccinated based on the date you remember getting your first dose. It is also very important that you remember what type/manufacturer of vaccine you received the first time as you need to get the same type for your second shot.

**Vaccine Safety and How it Works**

**Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

Yes! These vaccines have already been given to millions of people and have been shown to be safe and very good at preventing them from getting sick with COVID-19. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. The vaccine will continue to be monitored to make sure any rare problems are found as soon as possible and studied to see if they were caused by the vaccine.

- **Will the COVID-19 vaccines cause allergic reactions?**

  Very rarely, severe allergic reactions have been reported in persons receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. While these reactions are being studied, it is advised that people with a history of severe allergic reactions to injected or infused medications be observed for a minimum of 30 minutes after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. People with allergies to food, animals, venom, environmental dusts or pollens, or oral medications have not been shown to have an increased risk of reaction to the COVID-19 vaccines.

**Will the COVID-19 vaccine infect me with the virus?**

No. None of the vaccines currently being developed in the United States contain the virus, so there is no possibility of the vaccine infecting someone with the COVID-19. Some people who receive the vaccine will develop arm soreness or redness, fever, headache, chills, and fatigue as their immune system responds. These symptoms typically go away after a day or two.

**How does the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine work?**

These vaccines work by giving your body the recipe to make the protein that is on the outside of the coronavirus. When your body sees that protein, it will make protective antibodies to it. Later, if the body sees the real virus, it will remember seeing that protein and destroy the virus before it has a chance to make you sick.
How does the Johnson & Johnson vaccine work?
The Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses an established approach of employing a harmless cold virus to deliver a gene that carries the blueprint for the protein found on the surface of the coronavirus.

After receiving the vaccine, when will I be immune from COVID-19?
We have learned from clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people who took the vaccine that the

- The Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective at preventing illness from COVID-19 after 14 days from the second dose of the vaccine. You must get both doses to have the best protection against the virus.
- The Moderna vaccine is 94.5% effective at preventing illness from COVID-19 after 14 days from the second dose of vaccine. You must get both doses to have the best protection against the virus.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 85% effective in preventing severe disease and demonstrated complete protection against COVID-19 related hospitalization and death after 28 days from receiving the vaccine. This is a single dose vaccine.

If I get sick with COVID-19 after the first dose of the vaccine but before getting the second dose of the vaccine, what do I do about the second dose?
You should still plan to receive the second dose after you recover from your COVID-19 illness and after you finish your isolation period for COVID-19 infection (for most people, this will be 10 days after symptoms started or positive COVID-19 test, and no fever for 24 hours). Note that the second dose of vaccine should still be no sooner than the recommended waiting period for the second dose (21 days for the Pfizer vaccine, 28 days for the Moderna vaccine).

I received my first dose of the COVID19 Vaccine and a few days later was diagnosed with COVID19. I was treated with COVID Plasma Treatment. Should I wait to receive my second vaccine dose or do I need to restart the series?
If you have received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for COVID, you do not need to restart the vaccine series. Wait 90 days from the date of the infusion before receiving the second dose.

If I test positive after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, do I have COVID-19?
None of the COVID-19 vaccines available in the US can cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. Additionally, the first dose of vaccine only gives a partial amount of protection, so if you test positive by PCR after receiving the vaccine, it is likely a true positive. You should isolate for 10 days, inform your close contacts to quarantine, and seek medical care as needed.
Can you direct me to helpful information about the COVID vaccines?
The CDC has very helpful information on the vaccines available here.

Questions about Vaccine Phases

How do I know which “Phase” I am in so I know when I can get the vaccine?
Supply of COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. is limited right now. Tennessee’s COVID-19 Pandemic Vaccination Plan is designed with phases to help distribute the vaccine as fairly as possible. You can read this plan and find more information about COVID-19 vaccination phases in TN here, and check your eligibility for vaccination through our vaccine eligibility tool.

I keep hearing about Tennessee metropolitan counties (Metros). What counties are considered metropolitan counties and how do citizens know what phase they are vaccinating?
Metropolitan counties are independent from the state plan, and these counties may have different instructions, so residents in these areas should check with local authorities about their plans. These counties include Shelby, Madison, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Sullivan.

Who decides the Phases and how the vaccine is distributed?
The TN Department of Health, in partnership with the State Government and the TN COVID-19 Pandemic Vaccine Stakeholder Group, has developed a vaccination plan based upon the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine and the CDC's Playbook for Jurisdictions. You can read Tennessee's Vaccination Plan and find more information about COVID-19 vaccines here.

Why am I not in a higher priority phase and eligible to receive vaccine sooner?
While COVID-19 vaccine supplies are limited, Tennessee’s vaccination plan focuses on providing vaccines to those at highest risk of becoming infected with the virus and suffering from life-threatening disease. The plan hopes to help protect those Tennesseans who are most vulnerable or at highest risk of infection, protect those with no means to socially distance, and to protect the systems that keep us all safe. We will work as quickly as possible to provide vaccines to Tennesseans according to the phased approach set out in the state's plan, which is posted here. As vaccine supplies become increasingly available, we look forward to accelerating through our priority phases to cover the maximum number of Tennesseans in the shortest time possible.

Which phase do veterinarians and veterinary staff fall into?
If you are working in Commercial Agricultural or Commercial Food supply, you fall into the Phase 2. Otherwise you should follow your individual risk phase based on age or comorbidities.

Is there a plan for vaccinating people who are homebound but otherwise in-phase?
Yes, Tennessee Department of Health and Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability) is
working with home health agencies to reach these groups.

**How is the state making sure the minority population is being vaccinated?**
The Tennessee Department of Health is partnering with faith-based and community organizations, academic institutions, and federally-qualified health centers and other hospital systems to provide vaccinations to minority populations and underserved communities across the state. Through these partnerships, we have combined our efforts to develop lists of individuals within the current phase and schedule appointments for them to receive the vaccination in their respective county. We are working to eliminate transportation barriers for those without transportation. In addition, we have been facilitating virtual sessions to work individuals through tools available on the COVID-19 microsite (covid19.tn.gov) including vaccine eligibility, online appointments and registering for the vaccine waitlist. If you know of a church that is interested in partnering with us to provide the vaccine to minority populations, please contact us at Minority.Health@tn.gov.

**How do I get the vaccine if the state has already moved past my phase?**
Most healthcare workers and others in Phases 1a1 and 1a2 have received vaccine through their employer, their local or regional health department, or community partnerships. If you missed the opportunity to receive vaccine during your phase, you can make an appointment to be vaccinated now through your local health department (https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/county-vaccine-information/) or find a nearby community vaccine provider (https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/vaccination-locations/). Scheduling questionnaires include questions to identify those in earlier phases who still require vaccination.

**Questions about Where / How to Get the Vaccine**

**How do I know when it’s my turn to receive the vaccine? How do I register?**
Tennesseans can follow a simple, three-step process to learn when they’re eligible for vaccination and register for a vaccination appointment. A new video explains the registration process for users. Find the video tutorial at https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/.

1. **Find Your Phase:** Tennesseans can find out what phase of the vaccination plan they're in by visiting https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/eligibility/.

2. **Find the Phase Your County is Vaccinating:** To learn what phase your county is vaccinating, visit https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/county-vaccine-information/

3. **Register for a Vaccination Appointment:** People who are in a phase currently being vaccinated in their county can register online at https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/county-vaccine-information/ for an appointment time to receive a vaccination through their county health department. Click your county on the map and then click “Make
an Appointment” to register. Those who register will be asked to enter their name and contact information to be notified of their appointment date, time, and location as soon as vaccine becomes available.

*I heard that hospitals, pharmacies, and health departments are vaccinating the public if they have unused doses at the end of the day, can we show up at the facility to receive the vaccine?*

No, please do not show up at hospitals, pharmacies, or health departments without an appointment. Some hospitals, health departments, and pharmacies keep a signup sheet or email list for those interested in being contacted if there are unused doses at the end of the day.

*Are Community Pharmacies taking appointments or walk-ins? How do we know which pharmacies are vaccinating?*

Pharmacies are vaccinating by appointment only and are required to stay in the current phase for that county. For a list of Pharmacies, visit the COVID-19 Vaccine website, scroll down to the county map, and click on the Pharmacy Vaccine Locations link.

*When I received my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, I did not have an option to schedule my second vaccination. How can I schedule my second vaccine? How will I know when to come for my second dose?*

When you receive the vaccine, you will receive a card with the date of your first dose, the name/manufacturer of the vaccine received and the date you should receive your second dose. People who receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine at a county health department will be instructed by the health department as to how to schedule a second dose of vaccine. The health department will send out communication stating you are due for your second dose and when that location will be open / available for second doses. Many of the health departments have moved to online registration and there will be the ability to register specifically for a second dose. You should plan to return to the same location where your first vaccine was given to ensure you receive the same manufacturer of vaccine for the second dose.

*I received my first COVID-19 Vaccine at a temporary Point of Distribution (POD) in our county. For my second dose, will our health department open another POD in our county?*

Each county is operating differently, but when you schedule your second appointment, they will give you a location for the POD in your county.

*How do I get the vaccine if the state has already moved past my phase?*

Most healthcare workers and others in Phases 1a1 and 1a2 have received vaccine through their employer, their local or regional health department, or community partnerships. If you missed the opportunity to receive vaccine during your phase, you can make an appointment to be vaccinated now through your local health department (https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccinescounty-vaccine-information/) or find a nearby community vaccine provider.
If am on a waiting list, will I be notified when it’s time to schedule an appointment?
Yes, as soon as your county receives more vaccines to dispense, they will contact you to schedule an appointment. Visit the COVID-19 Vaccination webpage, click on the top “COVID-19 Data for: Select a County” box and select your county. You will be directed to more information regarding your county, and you will have an option to request an appointment or be added to a waitlist.

When will population 1C be vaccinated in Tennessee?
This depends on the supply and uptake of the vaccine; counties can be in different phases. Check our website to see what population your county is vaccinating.

Does a person need to have a note from their healthcare provider to prove they are in the high-risk population (Phase 1c)?
No, a note is not required to prove that an individual is eligible to be vaccinated in the Phase 1C population.

After I receive the COVID-19 vaccine through a health department or other facility, will my primary care provider be notified?
Patients are responsible for reporting to their primary care provider that they have received the vaccine. Vaccines are reported in TennIIS, and anyone who has access to TennIIS can check.

Questions about Pregnant and Breastfeeding Populations

Should I receive the the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant?
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people based on what we know now. Additionally, pregnant people with COVID-19 might be at increased risk for other adverse outcomes, such as preterm birth. Currently there are no studies on safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women to inform vaccine recommendations. ACIP has stated that pregnant and lactating women may receive the COVID-19 vaccine. A conversation between you and your healthcare provider may help with the decision about taking the vaccine.

Should I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am planning to get pregnant?
There is no recommendation for pregnancy testing before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after a COVID-19 vaccination.
Should I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am breastfeeding?
There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in breastfeeding people or the effects of COVID-19 vaccines on breastfed infants. COVID-19 vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. A lactating person who is part of a group recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., healthcare personnel) may choose to be vaccinated. A conversation between you and your healthcare provider may help with the decision about taking the vaccine.

Monitoring Side Effects after Vaccine

I heard there is a monitoring program for COVID-19 vaccines? How can I participate in this program?
It’s called V-safe, and it’s a smartphone-based monitoring program. It uses text messaging and web surveys to check-in with vaccine recipients after vaccination. Participants would report side effects and health impact events after the COVID-19 vaccination. Depending on your answer, someone from CDC may call to check on you and gather more information. V-safe will also remind you when it’s time to receive your second dose if one is needed. Before receiving the vaccine, you will receive an information sheet from your healthcare provider with V-safe information and a link to register.