



COVID-19 VACCINE: Frequently Asked Questions

LAST UPDATED: 5/7/2021

PLEASE NOTE: This document is updated as new information becomes available. Information about vaccine distribution and administration can change quickly. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is committed to transparency about the vaccine, including safety concerns, and will continuously educate the public and address questions the public may have.

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Vaccine Distribution

WHY ARE THE VACCINES SO IMPORTANT?

COVID-19 is now the leading cause of death in the United States. More than 7,600 Louisianans died from COVID in 2020 — that’s more than the number of deaths caused by accidents, stroke and diabetes combined in Louisiana in 2017. The vaccines are critical to ending the pandemic and getting our lives back to normal.

WHAT VACCINES ARE CURRENTLY IN USE?

There are now three (3) FDA-authorized vaccines:

VACCINE	NUMBER OF DOSES	AUTHORIZED ON
Pfizer-BioNTech (Pfizer)	2	December 11, 2020
Moderna	2	December 18, 2020
Johnson & Johnson (J&J)	1	February 27, 2021

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE VACCINES?

Everyone in Louisiana ages 16 and older is eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Having a large portion of the population vaccinated is our best shot at a return to some form of normalcy. Based on conversations with our federal partners, we are encouraged that Louisiana will receive enough doses to vaccinate everyone who wants a shot.



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Vaccine Administration

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO GET VACCINATED?

The federal government is making vaccines available at no cost to the individual. You do NOT need insurance to get the vaccine. If you do have insurance it may be billed but the vaccine will be no cost to YOU.

WHERE CAN I GET A VACCINE?

All nine public health regions and 64 parishes of the state have at least one vaccine location. To find one near you, visit <http://covidvaccine.la.gov>. Vaccines are available at select:

Chain pharmacies	Grocery stores	Retail stores
Independent pharmacies	Hospitals	Public health providers
Urgent cares	Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs)	Community events
Medical practices	Rural health clinics (RHCs)	Other healthcare providers

The Department of Health is also holding [Community Vaccine Events](#) around the state and has established a community vaccine site in Baton Rouge.

WHERE IS THE COMMUNITY VACCINE SITE IN BATON ROUGE AND HOW DO I REGISTER?

The vaccine site is in the Bon Carre Business Center’s rear parking lot, 7306 Harry Drive in Baton Rouge, behind Cox Communications. Hours are:

- **Monday:** Closed
- **Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday:** 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Register for the vaccine site [online](#) or by calling the LDH Covid-19 Vaccine Hotline at 1-855-453-0774.

The site will be open to the public through early June with the aim of administering about 3,000 vaccines per day.

The Pfizer vaccine will be used for first doses for the first three weeks and for second doses for the next three weeks. Johnson and Johnson vaccines will be used for the last two weeks of the effort.



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HOW CAN I FIND A PROVIDER?

Call the COVID-19 vaccine hotline at 1-855-453-0774. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. Operators will help you schedule your vaccine appointment, find vaccine providers in your area and connect you with medical professionals who can answer your vaccine questions.

You can also go to covidvaccine.la.gov, or call participating providers or 211. Operators at the 211 call center will help you locate a vaccine provider in a location that works for you and provide contact information for the provider.

WHAT IF I AM HOMEBOUND AND CANNOT VISIT A PHARMACY OR VACCINE SITE?

Anyone who is homebound, for whatever reason, can call the state's vaccine hotline at 1-855-453-0774 to have a provider bring a vaccine directly to your home.

DO I HAVE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT OR CAN I JUST WALK IN?

Patients who arrive without an appointment will not be vaccinated. Vaccinations are **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. Forming lines during a pandemic is not safe; also, providers need to be able to plan for their vaccinations.

IS PARENTAL CONSENT NEEDED FOR A PERSON UNDER AGE 18 TO GET THE SHOT? IF SO, CAN THE CONSENT BE GIVEN BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT?

Yes and yes. Parental consent for anyone under 18 years old is required. This can be done in person or via signed form ([PDF](#) | [Word](#)). If the minor child is accompanied by an adult who is not the parent, the form is still required and is valid.

WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE VACCINE?

The vaccines are administered by qualified healthcare professionals. For example, vaccinations for hospital staff are being done on site by the hospital.

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I HAVE HEARD THAT I MIGHT NEED TO GET MORE THAN ONE SHOT TO BE VACCINATED. IS THIS TRUE?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are in two doses, administered 3 or 4 weeks apart. You will get the necessary information about the second dose when you get your initial vaccine. The second dose is very important. One dose will not provide long-term protection. People vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine will receive the second dose 21 days after the first dose. Those getting the Moderna vaccine will receive the second dose 28 days after the first dose.

The J&J vaccine is given in one dose. We know many people actually prefer a one-and-done vaccine, like young people, people who are afraid of needles, and people who work multiple jobs or have difficulty taking time off work. This single dose also may offer more protection faster than the other two vaccines.

DO I HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE SAME PROVIDER FOR THE SECOND DOSE?

Yes, and you should make plans for your second dose immediately when you get your first dose. Schedule your next appointment right away or ask the provider if they will notify you when you're due for the second dose. You will also receive a card with information about the brand of vaccine you received (Moderna or Pfizer) and when you need the second dose. It is important that the second dose be the same brand as the first dose.

If you received the first dose in another state and it is impossible to return for the second dose, the Office of Public Health is offering second doses at some parish health units. Use the [Louisiana vaccine finder](#) site and search by parish. Not all health units are offering the vaccine, so you may need to search multiple parishes.

HOW LONG AFTER THE FIRST DOSE CAN I WAIT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE TO GET THE SECOND DOSE?

The CDC says people should get their second shot as close to the recommended 3-week (Pfizer) or 1-month (Moderna) interval as possible, but in a pinch, you can safely delay the second dose up to 42 days and likely longer. There is no need to restart the vaccination series if the second dose must be delayed.

IF I HAVE ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, a vaccine should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had COVID-19



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infection. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

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 ARE NURSING HOME RESIDENTS BEING VACCINATED?

All Louisiana nursing homes have signed onto a partnership between the federal government, CVS and Walgreens that calls for pharmacy workers to administer the vaccine in long-term care facilities. The Moderna vaccine is being used in that partnership and is available to both nursing home residents and staff.

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After Getting the Vaccine

WHAT IS THE CDC GUIDANCE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE FULLY VACCINATED?

People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series or two weeks after they receive a single-dose vaccine.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Visit with unvaccinated people (including children) from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Participate in outdoor activities and recreation without a mask, except in certain crowded settings and venues
- Resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.
- Refrain from testing before leaving the United States for international travel (unless required by the destination) and refrain from self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States.
- Refrain from testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic, with some exceptions for specific settings
- Refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic
- Refrain from routine screening testing if asymptomatic and feasible

For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:

- Take precautions in indoor public settings like wearing a well-fitted mask
- Wear masks that fit snugly when visiting indoors with unvaccinated people who are at [increased risk for severe COVID-19](#) disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease
- Wear well-fitted masks when visiting indoors with unvaccinated people from multiple households
- Avoid indoor large-sized in-person gatherings
- Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- Follow guidance issued by individual employers
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations

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WILL I STILL NEED TO WEAR A MASK AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING?

The face covering/mask [mandate](#) in Louisiana was lifted April 28, 2021 following months of sustained improvement in COVID hospitalizations and an increase in the supply and availability of COVID-19 vaccines.

Also, CDC has relaxed the rules on [mask wearing outdoors](#): Americans who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus no longer need to wear a mask for most outdoor activities. Masks are still recommended in crowded outdoor venues like sports stadiums.

Masks or face coverings should be worn in indoor public spaces and anytime in public when you are near others who are not in your immediate household.

When in doubt about whether to wear a mask at a certain activity where people outside of your everyday household will be present, you can stay safe by:

1. **Making sure everyone around you is vaccinated, or**
2. Maintaining the **2 out of 3 Rule**: To lower risk for COVID-19, make sure the activity meets two out of the following three conditions: Outdoors, Distanced and Masked.
 - **Outdoors + Distanced** = No Mask Recommended
 - **Outdoors + Not Distanced** = Mask Recommended
 - **Indoor + Distanced** = Mask Recommended

I HAVE HEARD THERE MAY BE SIDE EFFECTS. WHAT ARE THEY?

Minor side effects are a **normal sign** the body is building protection. You may experience pain and swelling in the arm, fever, chills, tiredness or a headache; most side effects will go away in a few days or less.

The likelihood of experiencing a serious side effect is less than 0.5%. A single serious side effect following a vaccination has been reported to the CDC: The person reported gastrointestinal distress and lightheadedness, and recovered after a brief hospital stay.

WILL I STILL NEED TO QUARANTINE IF I AM EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO IS INFECTED WITH COVID-19?

People who have been fully vaccinated against coronavirus (two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna, or one dose of J&J) do not have to quarantine if they are exposed to someone infected with the virus. However, they should still take precautions such as wearing a mask and practicing social distancing. For people who live in congregate settings such as nursing homes, the Department of Health still



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recommends quarantine for anyone who has been exposed.

HOW LONG WILL THE VACCINE OFFER PROTECTION?

These vaccines are new so there is not enough information at this point to know how long the vaccine will protect against the coronavirus. As more people are vaccinated, we will have more information about how long the protection will last.

I INSTALLED THE LA WALLET APP ON MY PHONE AND HAVE BEEN FULLY VACCINATED FOR COVID-19 FOR A WHILE. WHY IS IT NOT SHOWING THAT I AM FULLY VACCINATED?

For questions regarding the LA Wallet app and questions related to using LA Wallet to display your Covid-19 vaccination status on your phone, you can contact their helpdesk at 225-263-4488. You can also visit their [support page](#) for answers to frequently asked questions and further support options.

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Vaccine Development and Safety

HOW DO THE VACCINES WORK?

The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines use messenger RNA, or mRNA, and do not contain a live virus. mRNA carries a genetic instruction manual to your body that tells your immune system how to respond and protect you from exposure to the actual virus. Your body gets protection without the serious consequences of a severe illness due to COVID-19 exposure.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a viral vector vaccine and does not contain a live virus. It uses a harmless viral vector to create a spike protein that the immune system responds to, creating antibodies to protect against COVID-19.

ARE THE VACCINES EFFECTIVE?

Based on evidence from clinical trials, **all three vaccines are nearly 100% effective at preventing serious hospitalizations and deaths.** That's our most urgent, important goal. A recent CDC study of essential workers in real-world conditions found the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines reduced the risk of infection by 80% after 1 dose and 90% after 2 doses. The CDC will continue to provide updates as it learns more about how the vaccines work in real-world conditions.

ARE THE VACCINES SAFE? WHAT DOES FDA AUTHORIZATION MEAN?

Vaccines are authorized for use by the FDA, meaning clinical trials have proven the vaccines as a safe and effective defense against COVID-19. The FDA and ACIP will continue to monitor safety and effectiveness data.

No steps were skipped during the clinical trials and data review process for COVID-19 vaccines. Safety is a top priority. The COVID vaccines are being held to the same standards as other vaccines to make sure they are safe.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE?

On April 23, a CDC panel recommended that the pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine be lifted. The panel also recommended that a warning label be added to the vaccine packaging noting the very rare blood clotting disorder risk. Based on the panel's recommendation, the FDA ended the

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pause; states and local jurisdictions can now resume use of the J&J vaccine.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF OTHER VACCINES?

The identification of what is approximately a less than 2-in-a-million risk associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a sign that the nation's safety monitoring system for COVID vaccines is working. After any vaccine is successful in clinical trials and approved for use, the FDA continues to monitor it for safety. The pause in the use of the J&J vaccine allowed scientists to evaluate each incidence of the clotting disorder. They determined that the level of risk was very low and that the benefits of continued use of the J&J vaccine greatly outweighed any risk associated with it.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR THE BLOOD CLOTTING DISORDER ASSOCIATED WITH THE JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE?

The likelihood of the blood clotting disorder resulting from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is extremely rare. The risk varies by age and gender. There have been fewer than 1 case per million for men and for women who are 50 years or older; the risk is estimated to be about 7 cases per million for women age 18 to 49. If you have questions about the J&J vaccine or other vaccines, talk to your doctor.

ARE THE VACCINES OK FOR CHILDREN?

As of now, there is no vaccine for children, though the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for teenagers 16 years of age or older. Until there's a vaccine safely tested for children, there will not be a vaccine for children.

ARE THE VACCINES OK IF I AM PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING?

The CDC advises all pregnant people be given access to the vaccines. In Louisiana, anyone currently pregnant is currently eligible to be vaccinated.

While specific studies are ongoing, there has been no indication that there are negative effects for this population. Pregnant and breastfeeding people should discuss whether they should receive their vaccine with their providers.

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CAN THE VACCINES AFFECT MY FERTILITY?

There is zero evidence that COVID vaccines affect fertility. The vaccines tell the body how to fight the protein that is on the outside of the coronavirus, but this protein is completely different from the protein that allows for successful reproduction. The antibodies your body produces to fight the coronavirus will not attack reproductive proteins.

HOW CAN I TRUST A VACCINE THAT WAS DEVELOPED SO QUICKLY?

The COVID-19 vaccines are being developed faster than other vaccines because there is worldwide urgency, and because there was ample research in recent years into coronaviruses — the same viruses that were behind SARS and MERS outbreaks. Once Chinese scientists were able to create a genetic map of the coronavirus, scientists were able to use that information to create a vaccine that would replicate the spike proteins the coronavirus uses to infect cells and tell the body how to fight it.

More resources than usual are available to manufacturers to accelerate vaccine development because of the pandemic, including the U.S. government's commitment to buy vaccine doses up front. These accelerations will not impact vaccine safety.