

COVID-19 Vaccine Fast Facts



What is a vaccine?

Current vaccines contain safe amounts of weakened or killed virus (unable to replicate) so your own immune system can make antibodies against it. The COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live virus and cannot give you COVID-19.



What is this new method being used for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Pfizer and Moderna are using a new method to make vaccines: using messenger RNA (mRNA), something the body uses every day, that is specially coded for a small part of the COVID-19 virus (the spike protein) so your body can make antibodies against it that will fight off the real virus. This does **not** get into or change your DNA.



What happened in the vaccine trials?

In both trials, there were ~74,000 participants who got the vaccine. Participants represented diverse ethnicities and age ranges, and some were high-risk patients. They were given 2 injections approximately 1 month apart. Both vaccines were approximately 95% effective in preventing COVID-19. The vaccines also lowered the severity of the infection.

**Long term safety data and effectiveness will continue for the next 2 years.*



What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Fatigue, fever, headache and redness at the injection site (these usually happened after the second injection) were most commonly reported. These side effects resolved fairly quickly and are also seen with other vaccines. A small number (about 1%) of BJC/WUSM employees are reporting mild side effects.



How will the vaccine be given to those who need it?

The vaccine will be available in phases. The first phases prioritizes frontline workers, including doctors, nurses, housekeepers, food & nutrition workers, guest services, therapists, patient care techs and others. The final phase, which includes the general public, will likely be spring 2021.



How does a vaccine get approved?

It goes through intense medical review, data safety monitoring boards, vaccine project monitoring boards, and the CDC advisory committee. They are an independent group of scientists with no connections to government or drug companies.



Can I stop wearing a mask and stop physical distancing?

The vaccine doesn't stop the spread of COVID-19 if someone is already infected. This means you still have to practice prevention measures to stop the spread of the disease: wear a mask, wash your hands and physical distance.

If you are a patient-facing caregiver or an indirect health care worker who regularly enters BJC facilities and have not yet scheduled your vaccine, and you would like to, please ask your manager for assistance.