

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Question

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Information is subject to change



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Q: Where can I get timely and accurate vaccine information?

A: Updated information can be found at the following pages: carson.army.mil, evans.tricare.mil, health.mil/coronavirus, defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Operation-Warp-speed/, coronavirus.gov, cdc.gov/coronavirus, usa.gov/coronavirus and defense.gov/coronavirus.

Q: What is COVID-19?

A: COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. You can get COVID-19 through contact with another person who has the virus. It is predominantly a respiratory illness that can affect other organs. People with COVID19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms may include: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms you should talk to your provider or get tested immediately.

Q: What has the DOD done to ensure the vaccines they are distributing are safe?

A: According to the CDC, researchers develop vaccines and therapeutics to prevent and treat diseases in stages. In Phase 1 Trials, researchers test an experimental drug or treatment in a small group of people for the first time. In Phase 2 Trials, the experimental drug or treatment is given to a larger group of people to see if it's effective and to further evaluate its safety. In Phase 3 Trials, the experimental study drug or treatment is given to very large groups of people. Researchers confirm its effectiveness, monitor side effects, compare it to commonly used treatments, and collect information that will allow the experimental drug or treatment to be used safely. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires manufacturers to submit their raw data for review. The FDA collects and reviews safety, immune response, and efficacy data from the trial stages before it authorizes vaccines for use and distribution.

Q: What vaccine will I get at Evans Army Community Hospital?

A: The only COVID-19 vaccine currently available at Evans Army Community Hospital is the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine. The vaccine, while not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has been granted an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for use in individuals 18 years of age and older. In ongoing clinical trial, the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19 following 2 doses given 1 month apart. Additional information and the most current facts about this vaccine can be found at:

www.modernatx.com/covid19vaccine-eua.

Q: What is an Emergency use Authorization (EUA)?

A: The FDA has made the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine available under an emergency access mechanism called an EUA. The EUA is supported by a Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) declaration that circumstances exist to justify the emergency use of drugs and biological products during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FDA may issue an EUA when certain criteria are met, which includes that there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives. In addition, the FDA decision is based on the totality of the scientific evidence available showing that the product may be effective in preventing COVID-19 and that the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh the known and potential risks of the product. All of these criteria must be met to allow for the product to be used under an EUA.

The EUA for the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine is in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 EUA declaration justifying emergency use of these products, unless terminated or revoked (after which the products may no longer be used).

See the EUA for the Moderna Vaccine at <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

Q: What testing was done on the vaccine?

A: Before the EUA was granted the vaccine was rigorously tested for safety and efficacy during the development process. The FDA then undertakes a comprehensive review of all accumulated safety and manufacturing data

from the manufacturer to determine if it adequately ensures product quality and consistency before authorizing its use. Clinical trials of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine are ongoing. For more information on the FDA review process for this vaccine you can find the EUA at <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>.

Q: What are my benefits and risks if I choose to take the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: In an ongoing clinical trial, the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19 following 2 doses given 1 month apart. The duration of protection against COVID-19 is currently unknown.

Most people will only experience soreness at the injection site.

Other side effects could include pain, tenderness and swelling of the lymph nodes in the same arm of the injection, swelling (hardness), and redness. General side effects include: fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, nausea and vomiting, and fever. If you have questions or concerns about any of these benefits or risks please talk to your primary care provider.

Q: What should I mention to my provider before I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Tell your vaccination provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you: have any allergies, have a fever, have a bleeding disorder, if you're on a blood thinner, are immunocompromised, are on a medicine that affects your immune system, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding, have had an allergic reaction to other vaccines in the past, or have received another COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Should I get the vaccine if I am pregnant? Or plan to be?

A: The vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnant women. Pregnant women were not allowed to take part in the clinical trials of the vaccine. A few people who received the vaccines in the clinical trials did get pregnant. There have been no reports of any problems with these pregnancies, and they are continuing to be monitored. A disinformation campaign circulated online claiming sterility. These claims are not based in science and have been proven false. Speak with your doctor so you can make the best decision for you and your baby.

Q: What if I am breastfeeding?

A: The COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to people who are breastfeeding/lactating. Although lactating individuals were not allowed in the clinical trials, based on experience with other vaccines, the benefits of vaccination outweigh the very small safety concerns. You don't have to delay or stop breastfeeding just because you get vaccinated.

Q: I'm immune comprised, should I get vaccinated?

A: In most cases, vaccination is encouraged in immunocompromised individuals in order to protect them from COVID-19 infection. Discuss with your provider whether vaccination is appropriate for your particular medical condition. If indicated, high risk patients will be vaccinated during Phase 2 of the vaccination plan.

Q: What should I do if I have side effects?

A: If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital. Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away. To mitigate the risk of an unlikely severe reaction all recipients of the vaccine are required to stay under observation of a provider for 15 minutes.

Q: Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

A: No. The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2 and cannot give you COVID-19. Whereas some vaccines like the influenza vaccine include dead or weakened versions of the actual virus they are protecting you from, mRNA vaccines like those from Moderna and Pfizer are a new technology that includes a piece of genetic material which acts like a recipe to tell your body to make a part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This piece of virus is not harmful to your body without the rest of the virus, but it triggers your body to create antibodies that allows your immune system to rapidly respond in the future if you are exposed to SARS-CoV-2. This piece of genetic

material does not change your own DNA or other genetic material in any way, and is eventually broken down by your body naturally.

Q: Does the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?

A: No. The vaccines do not interact with the body's DNA (genetic material). Its only effect is to produce other proteins. This process occurs on a regular basis, the vaccine only prompts your body to get ready for a future exposure.

Q: What is mRNA?

A: According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine to protect against infectious diseases. To trigger an immune response, many vaccines put a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies. Not mRNA vaccines. Instead, they teach our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Q: I heard that we have never had an mRNA vaccine, is it safe?

A: According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines are new, but not unknown. Researchers have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines for decades. Interest has grown in these vaccines because they can be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials. This means the process can be standardized and scaled up, making vaccine development faster than traditional methods of making vaccines. mRNA vaccines have been studied before for flu, Zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus (CMV). As soon as the necessary information about the virus that causes COVID-19 was available, scientists began designing the mRNA instructions for cells to build the unique spike protein into an mRNA vaccine.

Q: What kind of information will be available to me before I receive the vaccine?

A: Each potential recipient of the COVID-19 vaccine will receive a vaccine-specific Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Fact Sheet for recipients from the FDA, which will provide the following information: basic information on COVID-19, symptoms, and what to discuss with a health care provider before vaccination, who should and should not receive the vaccine, and risks and benefits of the vaccine.

Q: Who is currently receiving the COVID-19 vaccine at Fort Carson?

A: COVID-19 vaccines are currently being administered to healthcare workers, support personnel and emergency services personnel. Future eligibility is in accordance with DOD guidelines.

Q: When will I be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: The supply of the COVID-19 vaccine is limited, there is no specific timeline as to when future shipments will arrive. All TRICARE beneficiaries and DOD personnel will get the vaccine in accordance with the guidance provided by their command and local military treatment facility.

Q: I'm deploying – when can I get the vaccine?

A: Personnel deploying overseas prior to July 2021 be offered an opportunity to take the vaccine during Phase 1.b.2. There is no current estimate as to when this phase will start, as it is dependent on receiving additional shipments of vaccine.

Q: I'm going to the NTC, when do I get the vaccine?

A: Healthy Soldiers, including those going TDY to training events, may be vaccinated during Phase 3. There is no current estimate as to when this phase will start, as it is dependent on receiving additional shipments of vaccine.

Q: Are Soldiers required to get the COVID-19 vaccine at this time?

A: No. Active-duty service members and in the Selected Reserve (including National Guard personnel) are eligible and encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccines at military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) or other DOD vaccination sites, as identified by the military departments.

Q: I'm a Family member, am I required to get a vaccine?

A: No one is required to receive the vaccine at this time. Healthy beneficiaries will be offered the vaccine during Phase 3.

Q: Can my kids go to school/CDC/CYS if I choose not to have them vaccinated?

A: There are currently no restrictions that affect vaccinated and unvaccinated people differently.

Q: What if I decide not to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Service members, DA civilians, contractors and dependents may decline the vaccination. Service members who decline the vaccination must complete the DHA 207. DA civilians, contractors and dependents will be asked to complete the form as well.

All personnel who decline the vaccine will still have the option to receive the vaccination. If you decide they want the vaccination at a later date contact your unit representative for a date and time. The time given will be based on current vaccinations on hand and the tier of vaccines being administered.

Q: If I've already recovered from COVID-19 infection, do I need to be vaccinated?

A: Yes, although patients should generally wait 90 days. Because the duration of immunity from natural infection with COVID-19 is unknown, the vaccine may have value in protecting people who have already had the disease. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Talk with your provider if you have been previously infected with COVID-19.

Q: If I get vaccinated, do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing?

A: Yes. Even vaccinated individuals have a small chance of contracting COVID-19. All vaccinated personnel will therefore continue to follow Fort Carson Covid-19 mitigation policies. Masks and physical distancing will still be necessary until a large proportion of the population is vaccinated and the vaccine is proven to provide long-term protection. Global and national public health authorities are expected to continue to recommend wearing masks and practicing physical distancing, for everyone, until pandemic risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

Q: Can I still give someone COVID-19 if I'm vaccinated?

A: Those who have not yet been fully vaccinated are still at risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Within 2 weeks after the second dose of the vaccine people are expected to have approximately 95% immunity; however, there is still a small chance that you could contract and spread COVID-19. For that reason, mask usage, social distancing, and quarantine procedures still apply regardless of vaccination status.

Q: Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines?

A: You cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccine within 14 days of receiving any other vaccination. You should not cross vaccine brands (ex: Moderna and Pfizer). Your second dose should be received at the same location as your first dose.

Q: Will TRICARE beneficiaries including military retirees have access to the vaccine?

A: Yes, based on DOD prioritization. While there is limited vaccine availability, vaccination distribution prioritization will focus on those providing direct medical care, maintaining essential national security and installation functions, deploying forces, and those beneficiaries at the highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19. TRICARE beneficiaries who receive care at a DOD Military Treatment Facility (MTF) are eligible to receive the vaccine at a DOD MTF. TRICARE beneficiaries who receive care at DOD MTFs on a space-available basis can alternately receive the vaccine through the local civilian jurisdiction.

Q: What if I am not available for the vaccine during my designated phase, or for the second dose (ex: TDY)?

A: Those who miss their phase or previously declined the COVID-19 vaccine may still be vaccinated in later phases. During your initial COVID-19 vaccine visit, your medical screener will ask if you will be available to receive your second COVID-19 vaccine 28 days afterward. In the event you are not available to receive the second vaccine on time, we recommend discussing options with your medical screener.

Q: Who should get the vaccine?

A: All adults who do not have a medical reason not to, should get the vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine is highly encouraged but not mandatory. Beneficiaries are strongly advised to take the vaccine to protect their health, to include families, and help lower the public health risks associated with COVID-19 throughout the community.

Q: Who shouldn't get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Those who have a history of adverse reactions to vaccines may consider not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. If you had a severe allergic reaction after getting the first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, CDC recommends that you should not get the second dose. All people who get a COVID-19 vaccine will be monitored on site. People who have had severe allergic reactions or who have had any type of immediate allergic reaction to a vaccine or injectable therapy will be monitored for at least 30 minutes after getting the vaccine. All other people should be monitored for at least 15 minutes after getting the vaccine.

Q: How likely am I to have an adverse reaction?

A: The vast majority of patients will only experience soreness at the injection site. Side effects that have been reported with the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine include fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, nausea and vomiting, and fever. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include: Difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, a fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over your body, dizziness and weakness.

Q: If I am high risk will I get my shot sooner?

A: High-risk beneficiaries will have the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine during Phase 2. The beginning of Phase 2 has not been determined but the community will be updated once dates are available.

Q: How will I be notified when vaccines are available for my phase?

A: At this time, Evans Army Community Hospital is in accordance with the DOD Distribution Plan. We are currently in Phase 1a, which prioritizes healthcare workers and emergency services personnel. Once we determine when Phase 2 will begin, Evans Army Community Hospital will announce online and on social media the process for signing up and receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Can I catch COVID-19 after I've received the first shot?

A: While some immunity may be received after the first dose, maximum immunity is not received until approximately two weeks after the second dose.

Q: What is the wait time between the shots?

A: Moderna COVID-19 vaccine recipients are encouraged to return for their second vaccine 28 days after their initial vaccine. Patients will receive a Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card during their initial vaccine visit to remind them of when to come for their second vaccine.

Q: Will I have to get vaccinated every year?

A: It is not currently known how long immunity from the COVID-19 vaccine lasts. In addition, it is possible that the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 may mutate in the future, which may then require a new vaccine. At this time, it is thought that the current COVID-19 vaccine is effective against all known strains of SARS-CoV-2.

Q: What age is eligible for the vaccine?

A: Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for all adults who are at least 18 years old. The current vaccine trials have not studied the safety and efficacy for children and manufactures are not currently asking the FDA for authorization to vaccinate children.

Q: Will I go into anaphylaxis shock if I get the vaccine?

A: A new CDC report finds that anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction, following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination appears to be rare. However, anaphylaxis requires immediate treatment. CDC is monitoring all reports of anaphylaxis and other adverse events and has provided guidance to healthcare providers so they can prepare for the possibility of an allergic reaction after vaccination.

Find the report here: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7002e1.htm>

Q: Does the COVID-19 vaccine contain synthetic material?

A: Many products that we use or consume contain substances that are not naturally occurring. This is true of the foods and drinks we enjoy, and of supplements we take. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain a single synthetic protein (Messenger RNA) that prompts our body to produce other proteins that mimic a piece of the COVID-19 virus. It is important to remember that the vaccines received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization after a rigorous review of safety and effectiveness. Many supplements contain multiple synthetic ingredients and are not regulated by the FDA. Vaccines are MUCH safer.

For additional information on the vaccine visit:

[CDC Interim Clinical Considerations of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Facts](#)

[Busting Myths About the COVID-19 Vaccinations](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines and Pregnancy](#)