

# COVID-19 VACCINE

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



COVID-19 has changed our lives in more ways than one. We can't leave our homes without masks and we have to distance ourselves from loved ones that live outside our homes. Many people have lost their jobs or risk their lives every day to care for others and provide for their families. Sadly, thousands of people have died from this virus. That ends here; it ends with the COVID-19 vaccine. Parkland is committed to telling you what you need to know in order to make this choice for yourself.

### **How do I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The COVID-19 vaccine is being given in phases, based on the guidelines set by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Each phase determines which groups of people are able to get the vaccine during that time. If you are a Parkland patient with an established history of care at Parkland, you will be contacted by Parkland when it is your turn to get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you are not a Parkland patient, you should sign up for the vaccine through the Dallas County Health and Human Services website at [www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination.php](http://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination.php) or call 1-855-466-8639. Registration help is available in English and Spanish.

### **How does the vaccine work?**

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines work by teaching your body how to defend against Covid-19 infection to keep you from getting seriously ill.

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots. Pfizer's vaccine must be taken 21 days apart, while Moderna's must be taken 28 days apart. For the vaccine to work you must receive your second dose. That means you are not immune to the COVID-19 until after the second of the vaccine.

Because it takes a few weeks for the body to learn how to fight COVID-19 after getting the vaccine it's important to continue wearing a mask, washing your hands and practicing social distancing.

### **Is the vaccine safe?**

Millions of Americans have now received the COVID-19 vaccine because they felt it was safe and the best way to protect their families and their communities. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves a vaccine only if it works and is safe. Many tests showed that the vaccine prevents infection of COVID-19 and that most people did very well with the vaccine without any serious problems from it. These tests also showed that age, race, ethnicity, medical problems and prior COVID-19 infection did not make the vaccine less safe for anyone.

### **Why should I get vaccinated?**

The more people who receive the vaccine, the quicker we can get back to a more normal life including visiting family and friends, attending worship services, going to sports events, entertainment and other activities. The vaccine will also help stop the spread of the virus in our community and end the pandemic.

While many people with COVID-19 do not have a bad case, there is no way to know how sick COVID-19 will make you. The vaccine helps protect you from getting sick and spreading the virus to others and can also lessen the symptoms if you do get sick.

### **Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine? Will the vaccine cause me to test positive for COVID-19?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your body to protect you against COVID-19; it does not have the live virus in it. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in use can give you COVID-19. They also will not cause you to test positive for COVID-19. Some people may have flu-like symptoms after getting the vaccine. These symptoms mean the vaccine is working and is not cause for concern. These symptoms will go away after a day or two.

### **Is it true that I will need to get two vaccinations?**

Yes. In order to protect you and your loved ones from COVID-19, the vaccines are done in two doses. This means you need two shots. You are not immune to COVID-19 until after your second dose of the vaccine.

Both Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two shots to protect you from the virus. Pfizer vaccines must be taken 21 days apart, while Moderna's vaccine must be taken 28 days apart. When you come in for your first dose, you will be given an appointment for the second dose. You will also get reminders by text or phone call in the days leading up to your second dose appointment.

### **What if I miss my second dose appointment?**

You should make every attempt to get your second dose at the appointed time. The second dose of the vaccine is very important for building immunity to COVID-19. If you miss your appointment for your second dose, you should try to get your second dose as soon as possible. If you miss your second dose, contact the agency or hospital which gave you your first dose and tell them you need the second dose.

### **Can I get my second dose if I was diagnosed with COVID-19 after my first dose of vaccine?**

If you get COVID-19 after getting your first dose of the vaccine, you will need to wait until your quarantine is completed AND you are symptom-free. If you have received monoclonal antibody or convalescent plasma as treatment for your COVID infection, you need to wait at least 90 days to get the second dose of COVID vaccine.

We want to reassure you that it is safe to get the second dose of the vaccine after being sick with COVID-19, and we highly encourage you to receive the second dose.

### **Who should not get the vaccine?**

Allergic reactions to vaccines are rare. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have had allergic reactions to vaccines in the past. You should not get the vaccine if you:

- Had a severe allergic reaction to the first dose of the vaccine
- Had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient of the vaccine
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have a history of allergies to medicines.

### **What if I am pregnant and/or breastfeeding?**

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that pregnant women talk to their healthcare provider about getting the COVID-19 vaccine. At this time, there are no signs that the available vaccines make it hard to get pregnant or harm a pregnant woman or her baby. Talk to your provider about

your questions and concerns to help you make a decision about the vaccine. To protect both mother and child, Parkland offers the vaccine to all pregnant women who qualify.

### **What if I have a medical condition like cancer or diabetes?**

Patients with medical conditions such as heart problems, cancer or diabetes are more likely to get a severe case of COVID-19. This is why we strongly encourage people with medical conditions to get the vaccine. If you have any questions, please talk to your healthcare provider so you can make an informed decision on receiving the vaccine.

### **Additional COVID-19 resources**

- Learn more about the vaccine from [the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- Get the most current information about who can get the vaccine from the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).
- Learn more about the [Moderna vaccine](#) and review the [Moderna vaccine fact sheet](#).
- Learn more about the [Pfizer vaccine](#) and review the [Pfizer vaccine fact sheet](#).