

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Vaccination Version 5

1. Where can DOC employees receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

DOC employees may receive vaccination in the community. A list of [WA State Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) COVID-19 vaccine locations can be found by visiting the [DOH Vaccine Locator](#) to find and schedule an appointment. If you need help, call the COVID-19 hotline 1-800-525-0127, then press #. All DOC employees and incarcerated individuals are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

Additionally, the DOC COVID-19 Vaccine Team will continue to schedule local vaccine clinics at worksites and has circulated a survey to determine demand.

Revised 8/30/2021

2. Will DOC employees or incarcerated individuals be required to be vaccinated?

The WA State Governor made the decision to require all state employees within his executive branch of government to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment, unless you have an approved medical or religious exemption. All DOC employees and contractors must be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021.

While COVID-19 vaccination is not required at this time for incarcerated individuals, we are strongly recommending that all incarcerated individuals are vaccinated. Getting vaccinated will help maintain a safe living environment and prevent COVID-19 outbreaks that threaten the health and well-being of all that live in DOC facilities. While declining the vaccine is an option, DOC's goal is 100% vaccine coverage among incarcerated individuals.

Revised 8/30/2021

3. Will DOC employees be charged for the vaccine? Can they be purchased online?

No. Employees should [not be charged](#) out-of-pocket costs or receive a bill from your provider or from any vaccination facility, regardless of your medical insurance coverage. Vaccines cannot be bought online.

Revised 8/30/2021

4. Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to receive the vaccine?

No, [you do not need to be a U.S. citizen to get the vaccine](#). That means you do not need a social security number, or other documents with your immigration status, to get the vaccine. Some vaccine providers might ask for a social security number, but you do not have to give one.

Revised 8/30/2021

5. Does the vaccine really work if I got COVID-19 anyway?

Even though some vaccinated people may still get sick, data from the clinical studies also showed that [COVID-19 vaccines were very effective against hospitalization and death from COVID-19](#). That means if you do get sick after you're fully vaccinated, you still have some benefit from the vaccine because you may only get a mild case instead of a serious case.

Revised 8/30/2021

6. Can vaccines give you COVID-19?

No. [None of the currently available COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19](#), so you cannot get the virus or the disease it causes from the vaccine. Having brief symptoms like fever, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, and nausea after you get a vaccine is normal and a sign your immune system is learning to fight the virus.

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7. Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility or reproductive health?

There is [no scientific evidence that vaccines cause infertility or impotence](#). When the vaccine enters your body, it works with your immune system to create antibodies to fight the coronavirus. This process does not interfere with your reproductive organs.

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8. What if I am pregnant or breast-feeding? Can I still get the vaccine?

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding and included in a group recommended to receive the vaccine, [you may receive a COVID-19 vaccine](#). However, it is recommended that you discuss this decision with your health care provider.

Revised 8/30/2021

9. If I've already had COVID-19, do I need a vaccine?

People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still [benefit from getting vaccinated](#). There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long people are protected from getting COVID-19 after they have had it (natural immunity).

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10. Does the COVID-19 vaccine enter your cells and change your DNA?

No. The COVID-19 vaccines are [designed to help your body's immune system](#) fight the coronavirus. The messenger RNA from two of the first types of COVID-19 vaccines does enter cells, but not the nucleus of the cells where DNA resides.

Revised 8/30/2021

11. Was the COVID-19 vaccine developed with or contain controversial substances?

The first two COVID-19 vaccines to be authorized by the FDA contain mRNA and other, [normal vaccine ingredients](#), such as fats (which protect the mRNA), salts, as well as a small amount of sugar. These COVID-19 vaccines were not developed using fetal tissue, and they do not contain any material, such as implants, microchips or tracking devices.

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12. Can receiving a COVID-19 vaccine cause you to be magnetic?

No. Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine [will not make you magnetic](#), including at the site of vaccination, which is usually your arm. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals.

Revised 8/30/2021

13. Is it safe for my child to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Studies show that [COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective](#). Like adults, children may have some side effects after COVID-19 vaccination. These side effects may affect their ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Children 12 years and older are currently eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Revised 8/30/2021

14. Will vaccinated people need booster doses?

The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, COVID-19 constantly evolves. Experts are looking at all available data to understand how well the vaccines are working, including how new variants, like Delta, affect vaccine effectiveness. [If FDA authorizes and ACIP recommends it](#), the goal is for people to start receiving a COVID-19 booster shot this fall.

Revised 8/30/2021

15. What are the effects of the Delta variant?

The [Delta variant](#) causes more infections and spreads faster than earlier forms of the virus that causes COVID-19. It might cause more severe illness than previous strains in unvaccinated people.

Revised 8/30/2021

16. What if incarcerated individuals decline to take the vaccine and then change their mind?

If incarcerated individuals decline the vaccine and then change their mind they will be able to receive it at a later time. They can make a request for vaccine dosing after previously declining through their facility COVID-19 Vaccine Coordinator.

Revised 8/30/2021

17. How do the available COVID-19 vaccines work?

The [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) issued [emergency use authorization](#) of the first COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Pfizer, on December 11, 2020, and the second developed by Moderna, on 12/18/20. To date Washington Corrections has received only doses of the Moderna vaccine. Both are [messenger RNA \(mRNA\) vaccines](#). In the human body, mRNA contains the instructions for creating proteins inside cells. In the case of these vaccines, the

mRNA instructs the human cell to make viral proteins that stimulate the body's immune system to protect against future infection by the virus that causes COVID-19.

Revised 2/2/2021

18. Are the vaccines effective at preventing COVID-19 disease?

Yes, they are extremely effective in preventing symptomatic disease. In large phase 3 clinical trials, which enrolled tens of thousands of patients each, the two available COVID-19 vaccines were both approximately 94-95% effective at preventing symptoms due to COVID-19 compared with patients who received placebo.

Revised 2/2/2021

19. Is the vaccine more dangerous than being infected with COVID-19??

No. As of January 22, 2021, more than 400,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 infection, including many who were young and previously healthy. Vaccines must undergo rigorous testing in clinical trials before they can be approved for use. The available COVID-19 vaccines were associated with only minor, temporary side effects in clinical trials and more serious side effects are exceedingly rare.

Revised 2/2/2021

20. What are the short-term side effects of the vaccine?

Some individuals experience no side effects and some experience only soreness at the site of the injection. Others have side effects from COVID-19 vaccination that may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. These side effects might include muscle aches, headache, and fever.

Revised 2/2/2021

21. What if someone has an adverse reaction to the vaccine that is more serious than the side effects?

DOC employees and incarcerated individuals will be monitored for adverse reactions by medical staff for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given, or for 30 minutes if they have a history of severe allergic reactions. If they have an adverse reaction after that, such as swelling of the face, mouth, difficulty swallowing or breathing, they should call 911 immediately or declare a medical emergency.

Revised 2/2/2021

22. Are there any long term side effects from the vaccine?

Since these vaccines have only been in existence for several months there is no evidence with which to answer this question with certainty. However, in general, long term adverse events from vaccines are exceedingly rare. Additionally, there is a national [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#) that monitors vaccines for safety events after they have been approved and are in use, which will give us more information about long term safety in the future.

Revised 2/2/2021

23. Can I receive the vaccine if I have a history of allergies?

Yes, people with previous histories of severe allergies to other vaccines, medications, foods or bee stings can still receive the vaccine, however, it is recommended they be monitored for 30 minutes instead of the usual 15. Severe allergic reactions to the available COVID-19 vaccines have been reported in the media, but are extremely rare.

Revised 2/2/2021

24. Can the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?

The [mRNA](#) that comprises the COVID-19 vaccines does not enter the nucleus of human cells, where DNA resides. The mRNA is taken up into the outer part of the cell, where viral proteins are made, and then the mRNA is rapidly destroyed.

Revised 2/2/2021

25. If both vaccines require two doses, can DOC employees mix the doses and get the Moderna vaccine first followed by the Pfizer vaccine?

No, both doses employees receive must be from the same manufacturer. The two available vaccines are not interchangeable. Moderna's vaccine doses are given 28 days apart, and Pfizer's 21 days apart.

Revised 2/2/2021

26. How will people be sure to get their second dose? Is timing essential?

Tracking systems have been developed to ensure that DOC employees and incarcerated individuals receive the second dose of the correct vaccine at the right time. If you have questions about the second dose or believe you are overdue contact the facility COVID-19 vaccine coordinator by email or kite.

Timing of the second dose is important and should be given as close as possible to the recommended time interval. However, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) recently recommended that second doses of both vaccines currently in use [can be given up to 6 weeks from the first and still be effective](#) in cases where adhering to the time interval recommendation is not possible.

Revised 2/2/2021

27. If I tested positive for COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?

Yes, you should still be vaccinated against COVID-19. Natural immunity to COVID-19, which is your body's immune response to infection, wanes over time, so it is recommended that you receive vaccine even if you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past.

Revised 2/2/2021

28. Will the fact that DOC employees received a vaccine go into their personal medical records?

Record of employee COVID-19 vaccination will be entered into [Washington State's Immunization Information System](#) so employee's primary care provider can confirm that they received it.

Revised 8/30/2021

29. Once DOC employees and incarcerated individuals are vaccinated, do they still need to mask and physical distance?

Yes. DOC's [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Matrix](#) should be followed to determine appropriate level of PPE.

Revised 8/30/2021

30. When will Washington DOC receive doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?

This question is no longer relevant.

Revised 8/30/2021

31. How will you distribute the vaccines?

This question is no longer relevant.

Revised 8/30/2021

32. Is Washington State Department of Corrections developing a priority list for receiving vaccinations?

This question is no longer relevant.

Revised 8/30/2021