

## Questions and Answers About the COVID-19 Vaccine

Californians have given up a lot to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Help is on the way. The State is rolling out safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is leading the vaccine efforts along with each county. These FAQs give information about the vaccine. We will update them as we get more information.

### 1. Does California have COVID-19 vaccines?

Yes, there are two vaccines.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine
- The Moderna Vaccine

The federal Food and Drug Administration may approve other vaccines in the future.

### 2. How much will a vaccine cost?

The vaccines are free.

### 3. How old do you have to be to get a vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine is for people 16 years or older. The Moderna Vaccine is for people 18 years or older. The person giving you the vaccine shots will know what is right.

### 4. What does the vaccine do?

The vaccine helps protect you from getting COVID-19. It also may keep you from getting seriously ill if you do get COVID-19.

### 5. Does the vaccine work?

Yes. The vaccines are 94 to 95 percent effective one or two weeks after the second vaccine shot.

### 6. How long does it take for the vaccine to work?

The vaccine is given in two shots. There is a waiting period between the shots. The person giving the vaccine will help you schedule the second appointment. It takes one or two weeks after the second vaccine shot for it to be most effective.

### 7. Do I have to get a vaccine?

You do not have to get a vaccine.

**8. Is consent required to get the vaccine?**

Yes, consent is required to get the vaccine.

**9. Who can give consent for a person receiving services from a regional center?**

Consent is given by the person who can make medical decisions. This may include:

- An adult regional center consumer can give their own consent. The consumer can ask for help from a family member or other individual they trust.
- A consumer can ask the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to appoint an authorized representative to help make decisions. Request an authorized representative by emailing [council@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:council@scdd.ca.gov).
- Parents or legal guardians of minor children.
- People allowed to make decisions under a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare.
- Conservators of adults, if the court has given the conservator the right to make medical treatment decisions.
- In some cases, a regional center Executive Director may give consent when the person is unable to and no one else can.

**10. After I get the vaccine, should I wear a mask and follow other safety procedures?**

Yes, you should still wear a mask, wash your hands and stay six feet apart until the vaccine has been given to a lot of people. The vaccine is not 100% effective, and it also may not prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people, even if you are protected.

**11. Is my privacy protected if I get a vaccine?**

Yes. California law says you can't be identified.

**12. Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. The vaccine boosts your immune system so it is prepared to fight the COVID-19 virus.

**13. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

Yes. Qualified scientists looked closely at the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines and agree they are safe. Both vaccines have been approved by the federal government.

You can read more about vaccine safety on the [CDC's website](#).

**14. Will the vaccines make me feel side effects or sick?**

You may have a sore arm, aches, fever, or feel tired for a few days. If you are worried about feeling sick or having an allergic reaction, talk with your doctor before getting a vaccine.

Some people should not get the vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you have a history of severe allergic reactions to shots, or if you have any questions.

**15. Are there enough vaccines for everyone?**

No. Right now the vaccine supply is limited. Priorities for the vaccine are health care workers, and some other groups. Later in 2021, most people in California can get vaccinated.

**16. When can I be vaccinated?**

The next question and answer describes California's vaccination priorities for groups of people. Each county decides when people can be vaccinated, based upon available supply of vaccine. Your county department of public health or health care provider can provide more detail. A list of county public health departments is here:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/get-local-information/>.

**17. What is the state's plan for giving vaccines?**

The State of California will give the vaccine to groups in this order:

- A. Healthcare workers, long-term care staff, and residents of long-term care settings. This includes people living in:
  - a. Skilled Nursing Facilities
  - b. Intermediate Care Facilities
  - c. Adult Residential Facilities for Persons with Special Health Care Needs (ARFPSHN)
  - d. Other licensed residential facilities and their staff
- B. People over 64 years of age and those who work in education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture.
- C. People over 16 years of age who have a medical condition or disability that increases their risk of severe medical complications or death from COVID-19.
- D. People in certain jobs.

**18. When can providers who serve regional center consumers get the vaccine?**

Providers who work in long-term care facilities (ARFPSHN, Enhanced Behavioral Supports Homes, and other licensed residential facilities) are in the first group to get the vaccine. The following people also are in the first group:

- Home health care and in-home supportive services
- Community health workers, including promotoras
- Supported living services
- Family Home Agencies and contractors
- Congregate Living Health facilities
- People providing in-home services, like respite, applied behavioral analysis, independent living skills training, and Early Start services

**19. Will any regional center staff get vaccines during the first group?**

Regional center staff who meet with people in facilities can get the vaccine in the first group.

**20. Where can I find more information about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

- Go to [California Department of Public Health's website: COVID-19](#).
- Go to [the Center for Disease Control's website](#) for federal information about the vaccine.

**21. Will the Department of Developmental Services provide more information regarding vaccinations?**

Yes, as more information comes out, the Department will update these frequently asked questions on [our website](#).

If you did not find the information you are looking for, please email us at [DDSC19@dds.ca.gov](mailto:DDSC19@dds.ca.gov).

You can also get more information on your county's Department of Public Health website, which you can find here: <https://covid19.ca.gov/get-local-information/>.