

# COVID-19 - What You Need to Know

## What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a highly contagious infectious disease. It spreads quickly.
- Symptoms can vary from person to person but often include flu- and cold-like symptoms such as fever, body aches, runny and stuffy nose, cough, sore throat, and trouble breathing. COVID-19 can also cause loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- While most people who get COVID-19 have mild symptoms, some can get very sick.
- In the U.S., over 1 million people died from COVID-19 between 2020 and 2024. Nearly 7 million people were hospitalized due to COVID-19 during that time. These numbers would be higher if not for COVID-19 vaccines.

## How can we prevent COVID-19?

- Three COVID-19 vaccines are available: mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna and a subunit vaccine from Novavax. These protect against severe COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death.
- The SARS-CoV-2 virus changes as it circulates, creating new variants. Current updated vaccines were formulated to provide protection against the circulating variant(s).
- Everyone 6 months and older should get at least one (1) dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine. You may need to discuss the vaccine with your healthcare provider before getting it for yourself or your child.

### Infants and children

Younger children (down to 6 months old) may need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccine to be fully protected.

### People with weakened immune systems

The vaccine is safe and recommended for adults and children with weakened immune systems. These people may get additional doses of updated COVID-19 vaccines.

### Pregnant people

People who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are breastfeeding should get one (1) dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

### Adults

All adults should receive one (1) dose of COVID-19 vaccine. This is especially important for those at increased risk for COVID, including people aged 65 years and older.

**Flip over to read about the risk of COVID-19  
and COVID-19 vaccine safety.**



## Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

- **COVID-19 vaccines are very safe.** Like any medicine, vaccines can have side effects. Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days.
- Common side effects include fever, headache, or body aches. Some people may have redness or pain where the shot was given and may feel tired. They may also have chills, nausea, and swollen lymph nodes.
- In rare cases, there have been reports of myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation) after vaccination. There have been about 9 reported cases for every 1 million people vaccinated. The risk of developing heart inflammation from COVID-19 infection is greater than from vaccination.
- COVID-19 vaccines are continuously studied and monitored for safety, and the risk for a severe allergic or other adverse reaction is rare. The choice to not get vaccinated is ultimately more risky because it could lead to catching a potentially deadly disease.

## What are the risks of COVID-19?

- **Older adults and people with high-risk and chronic health conditions** are at highest risk for complications from COVID-19.
- Healthy adults and young children can also get very sick from the disease. Some people will develop long-term health effects after infection, called "Long COVID."
- Some people also develop heart inflammation during or after COVID-19 infection.
- Children can get sick after COVID-19 with a disease called MIS-C that causes fever and other symptoms including heart problems.
- **While COVID-19 infection can be mild in some people, there is no way to tell who will get a severe infection. Staying up to date with the latest vaccine is the best way to prevent COVID-19!**

Questions about COVID-19 vaccines? Visit [immunizecolorado.org/covid-19-vaccines](https://immunizecolorado.org/covid-19-vaccines) or talk to your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or community health center.

**Find free a low-cost vaccine provider near you:**  
**[cdphe.colorado.gov/find-free-low-cost-vaccine-provider](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/find-free-low-cost-vaccine-provider)**

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