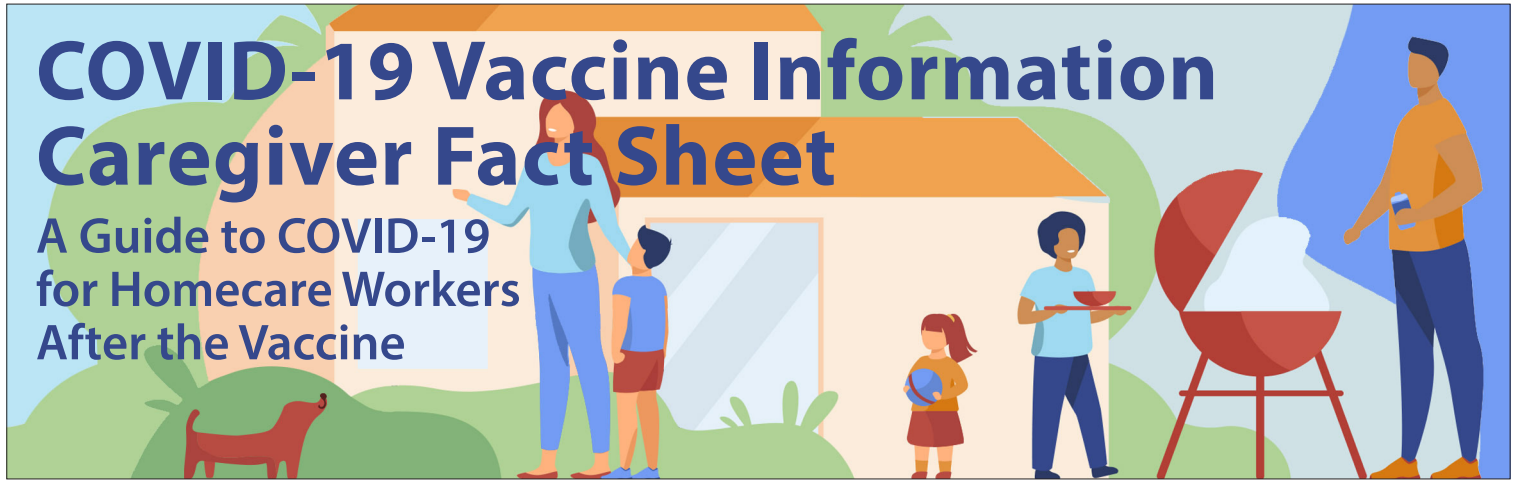


COVID-19 Vaccine Information Caregiver Fact Sheet

A Guide to COVID-19 for Homecare Workers After the Vaccine



Updated April 14, 2021

Everyone Should Ask Questions

Everywhere you turn, people have strong opinions and many unanswered questions about the COVID vaccines. See below to learn what's true and what's not. We use the latest science to separate fact from fiction.

COVID Vaccine Facts for Homecare Workers

I've had one dose of an mRNA vaccine.

Am I protected?

Well, that depends on which vaccine and when you got vaccinated. There are 3 vaccines approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for use in the US.

- The Johnson and Johnson vaccine is a one-dose vaccine and it takes 4 weeks for our body's immune response to reach its maximum level of protection. As of April 13, 2021 the CDC and FDA have paused use of this vaccine due to safety concerns.
- The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are two-dose vaccines. It takes 2 weeks after the second dose to reach a maximum level of protection.

What do you mean by a maximum level of protection? How much do these vaccines protect me?

Well, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently found that nearly 4000 first responders and frontline healthcare workers who got vaccinated reached a level of 80% protection two weeks after the first dose. The protection from the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines goes all the way up to 90% two weeks after the second dose. This is based on what's happening in the real world after people are vaccinated.

Why do some vaccines require 2 doses instead of 1 dose?

The mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna both require 2 doses to offer the best protection. The first dose triggers our bodies to start making antibodies that can protect us against the virus. The second dose helps to strengthen our body's response to the first dose of the vaccine.

How many people have gotten the vaccine so far?

As of April 1, 2021, more than 590 million doses have been given worldwide. 150 million of them were in the US and 2.8 million doses were administered in Maryland.

I still don't understand why I need the COVID vaccine if I've already had the virus.

It's natural to wonder about this. The CDC recommends vaccination as a safer way to build protection against COVID than getting sick from the virus. Even after you've had COVID, you could still get reinfected. That's one reason why it is important to get vaccinated even if you've had a previous COVID infection. No one knows how long immune protection from COVID infection may last. Talk to your healthcare provider to figure out what's best for your situation.

Who to Ask

Rely on trusted sources for up-to-date COVID vaccine information: [The US Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov).

What side effects should I worry about after the 1st dose versus the 2nd dose?

The most common side effects after the first dose include, but are not limited to:

- Arm pain, redness, and swelling
- Muscle pain, fatigue, and headaches
- Chills, fever, and nausea
- COVID arm--a splotchy rash on your arm a few days after the vaccine and anaphylaxis (severe allergy)

Side effects may be more intense after the second dose.

While the Johnson and Johnson vaccine is not an mRNA vaccine, its use has been paused by agencies in the federal government for safety reasons.

So, does the vaccine prevent me from getting infected in the first place?

There was exciting news from CDC on March 29, 2021 on this question. They just released results from a study of nearly 4000 healthcare workers and first responders who were vaccinated and got frequent COVID testing.

The results showed that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines prevented COVID infection! This means that the answer is Yes. The vaccine helps to provide some protection against getting COVID. But it's still early days. Scientists still have a lot to learn.

Why do I still need to wear a mask if I've gotten both doses of my vaccine?

It is important to continue wearing a mask and to socially distance yourself from others, even after you have been fully vaccinated. Scientists are still learning how much the vaccines protect against virus variants. Also, the information about how much the mRNA vaccines prevent infection is brand new. That is why the Centers for Disease Control still recommends effective COVID prevention steps like wearing a mask and maintaining social distance.

Now that I'm fully vaccinated, when is it okay to take off my mask

Yes According to the CDC, there are some other specific situations where a fully vaccinated person can gather indoors with others and not wear a mask. They report that you can remove your mask in the following situations:

- Small groups of fully vaccinated people can gather indoors can meet without wearing a mask.
- One fully vaccinated person does not have to wear a mask when visiting indoors with a small group of unvaccinated people in a single household if no one in that household is at high risk for severe illness if they get COVID-19.

Sources

[Thompson MG, et al. Interim Estimates of Vaccine Effectiveness of BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 COVID-19 Vaccines in Preventing SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Health Care Personnel, First Responders, and Other Essential and Frontline Workers — Eight U.S. Locations, December 2020–March 2021. MMWR. ePub: 29 March 2021.](#)

[More Than 590 Million Shots Given: Covid-19 Tracker. Bloomberg. Updated on April 1, 2021.](#)

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Provided in partnership by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response and the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association.

Check with your home care agency to find out if they have updated their mask-wearing policies based on the latest CDC recommendations. It's a best practice to wear a mask and remain socially distanced at work.

How do I know if someone is at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19?

The CDC has summarized the types of conditions that put people at high risk of severe illness if they become infected with COVID-19. They define severe illness as getting sick enough to require hospitalization, intensive care, a ventilator, or death.

They include being over age 65, having chronic kidney, lung, or liver disease, diabetes, heart failure, obesity, HIV, or other illnesses that hurt the immune system, and more.

Why do I still need to get regular COVID testing for work after I get the vaccine?

According to the CDC, you do not need to quarantine or get tested if you are exposed to someone who has COVID-19, unless you develop symptoms. Check with your supervisor to find out if your agency's COVID-19 testing policies have changed for staff who have been fully vaccinated. Follow your agency's policies.

Will my home care agency require me to get the vaccine?

It is up to your home care agency to set its own policies around vaccination. Some agencies may require their client-facing staff to get vaccinated. Other agencies may decide to make COVID vaccination optional. More and more older adults and their families are requesting to work with caregiving professionals who have been fully vaccinated.

[CDC Real-World Study Confirms Protective Benefits of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines. CDC Press Release. Mar 29, 2021.](#)

[When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others. CDC. Updated on March 23, 2021.](#)

[Marks, Peter. Joint CDC and FDA Statement on J&J COVID-19 Vaccine. From the Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research \(CBER\) at the US Food and Drug Administration. April 13, 2021.](#)

WRITE THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF YOUR HOME CARE/
HOSPICE COMPANY IN THIS BOX.