

# COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION



The COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help stop the pandemic. They provide a safer way to immunity by avoiding the severe risks and complications created by the COVID-19 virus.

## When will I be eligible to receive the vaccine?

The Department of Health has established a vaccination plan to work through priority groups. Each priority group is immunized **as vaccination doses become available**. Once all individuals in one priority group has been offered the opportunity to receive the vaccine, the Department of Health instructs vaccinators to move to the next priority group. Information about where to go and how to receive it if you fall into a priority group will be available at that time. You can find out if you fall in a priority group by checking [brookingshealth.org/Vaccine](https://brookingshealth.org/Vaccine); the Department of Health's website, [covid.sd.gov](https://covid.sd.gov); or by calling the Helpline Center at **211**.

Currently the Department of Health anticipates the vaccine will be available for the general public (Phase 2) in May 2021.

## Is the vaccine safe?

The U.S. vaccine safety system works to ensure all vaccines are as safe as possible. Federal agencies and vaccine manufacturers alike have made safety a top priority as they have developed and authorized a COVID-19 vaccine. All vaccines go through clinical trial to test safety and effectiveness. For COVID-19, the FDA setup rigorous standards for developers to meet. Once a vaccine has been authorized for use, monitoring continues to track problems or side effects that were not detected during clinical trials. Problems are most likely to emerge early in the testing process where they can be identified and addressed.

So far, none of the vaccine trials have reported any serious safety concerns. People with severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to injectable medications, components of the vaccine or other vaccines should discuss the risk with their primary care provider.

## Does the vaccine contain any allergens?

Each vaccine manufacturer uses different ingredients to produce their vaccine. Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine contain eggs, preservatives or latex. A full list of ingredients is available at on each vaccine manufacturers' website and a sheet with allergen information will be given to you prior to receiving the vaccine. If you are allergic to ingredients within the vaccine, please inform your vaccinator.

## How does the vaccine work?

The COVID-19 vaccination helps protect people by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. By avoiding getting sick from the virus, people also avoid the severe risks and complications of the virus, including possible death.

## Why do I need two doses of the same vaccine?

When a vaccine requires two doses, the first dose helps your body recognize the virus and gets your immune system ready. The second shot strengthens your immune response, preparing your body to fight infection.

One shot is not as effective in protecting you from COVID-19 as two shots are. One dose is only about 50% effective; two doses are about 95% effective. Because each vaccine is designed slightly differently, the two vaccines available, Pfizer and Moderna, are not interchangeable.

## What side effects does the vaccine cause? How long will they last?

Reactions from a vaccine are a normal response and means the vaccine and your immune system are both working correctly. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been associated with the following side effects which were sometimes slightly worse after the second dose:

- ◆ Redness or swelling at the injection site
- ◆ Chills
- ◆ Tiredness
- ◆ Joint Pain
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Muscle pain
- ◆ Vomiting and Diarrhea

Side effect length varies from person to person, but generally they go away within a few days.

## Can I get my vaccination from a Brookings Health System vaccination event if I do not live in Brookings County?

Brookings Health System has been appointed by the South Dakota Department of Health as the vaccine distributor for Brookings County only.

## How many different types of vaccines will come to South Dakota? Will we be able to choose the type we want?

The federal government disburses vaccine doses based upon available inventory and equitably dispenses each vaccine approved for use to the states. Currently the South Dakota Department of Health does not get to choose which vaccine types they receive and distribute.

Brookings Health System receives vaccines in limited increments. Each vaccine shipment has a limited shelf life. As such, Brookings Health System must quickly distribute vaccine doses as they arrive. We do not have the ability to allow individuals to choose which vaccine they receive.

## How long after I get the vaccine will it start to be effective?

It typically takes a couple of weeks for the body to build immunity after receiving the second dose of vaccine.

## What is the timeline for vaccine distribution?

The South Dakota Department of Health has established a vaccination plan. The plan uses phases to cover priority groups, such as healthcare workers and those most at risk from COVID-19, first. Once one phase or sub-phase is completed, vaccinations will be offered to the next eligible group. How quickly each group can be vaccinated depends on the number of doses allocated and the number of people in that group choosing to receive the vaccine.

Brookings Health System will move through the phases and priority groups as quickly as we are able. You may find a link to the Department of Health's estimated timetable for each group at [brookingshealth.org/Vaccine](https://brookingshealth.org/Vaccine).

## Where will the vaccine be distributed?

Vaccine distribution may vary depending upon the number of vaccine doses received. Smaller vaccine allocations may be distributed at the hospital, one of the local clinics or another site. Mass vaccination points of dispensing, commonly called PODs, will happen with the assistance of the Brookings County Pandemic Planning and Coordination Committee (PPCC) at sites such as the Swiftel Center or SDSU. Information will be given for each vaccine event at that time.

## Who will distribute the vaccine? (i.e. experienced health care person, volunteer)

Brookings Health System has been selected by the South Dakota Department of Health to oversee vaccine distribution to Brookings County residents. Mass vaccination points of dispensing, commonly called PODs, will happen with the assistance of the Brookings County Pandemic Planning and Coordination Committee (PPCC). All vaccines will be administered by licensed health care professionals who are trained to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

## Can we stop wearing masks and social distancing once we have two vaccine doses?

No. The vaccine is one tool to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. Combining the vaccination with other measures gives us the best opportunity to stop the pandemic. The CDC will not know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until they have more data. As such, other safety measures, including mask wearing, social distancing and frequent hand washing, should continue until further guidance is given by the CDC and South Dakota Department of Health.

## If I've had COVID-19, will I need a vaccination?

Yes. According to the CDC, there is not enough information currently available on natural immunity to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this.

## Can I get COVID-19 from a vaccine?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, an individual could experience symptoms, such as fever, after getting the vaccine as the body builds immunity. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

