

COVID-19 vaccinations are underway across New Jersey.

New Jersey will roll out COVID-19 vaccines in a phased approach to all adults who live, work, or are being educated in the State. Within six months, New Jersey aims to vaccinate 70 percent of the adult population.

- **Pre-Register for the Vaccine:** Enroll in the State's vaccination registration portal (*coming soon*).
- **Learn More About COVID-19 Vaccination:** Click on the icons below to learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and the State's vaccination plans below.
- **For Health Care Providers:** For additional information on COVID-19 vaccination, visit the [Department of Health's COVID-19 vaccination page](#). **Vaccination Information for Phase 1A – Healthcare Workers and Long-term Care Residents**

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

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Vaccines work by triggering a person's immune system to develop protection against a disease. COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection.

Both of the vaccines that have received an FDA Emergency Use Authorization to date are messenger RNA vaccines (mRNA). Unlike many other vaccines which put a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies, mRNA vaccines when injected instruct our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

This is the first time that mRNA vaccines have received Emergency Use Authorization or been distributed to the public, but researchers have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines for decades. Interest has grown in these vaccines because they can be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials. This means the process can be standardized and scaled up, making vaccine development and production faster than traditional methods of making vaccines.

As soon as the necessary information about the virus that causes COVID-19 was available, scientists began designing the mRNA vaccine for cells to build the unique spike protein into an mRNA vaccine.

For more of how COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work, [visit this CDC page](#). Additional information on other COVID-19 vaccines that are or soon will be undergoing large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials in the United States [can be found here](#).

What to Know About Available COVID-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized for use have gone through clinical trials involving tens of thousands of participants to determine their safety and efficacy.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued Emergency Use Authorizations for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna vaccines.

For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)

For the Moderna vaccine, please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Moderna Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)

Both vaccines are given as an injection into the muscle and as a series of two shots. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is two doses given 21 days apart and the Moderna vaccine is two doses given 28 days apart.

COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests. Vaccines won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.

People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated. At this time, experts do not know how long until someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection (natural immunity) varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggest natural immunity may not last very long. Although there is no minimal interval between infection and vaccination, current evidence suggests reinfection is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection, and thus persons with documented acute infection in the preceding 90 days may defer vaccination until the end of this period, if desired.

Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an immune response without having to experience sickness.

Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA. mRNA (messenger ribonucleic acid) can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA).

Sources: [NJ DOH COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs](#), [NJ DOH COVID-19 Vaccines - Know the Facts](#), [CDC](#); https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Public_FAQ.pdf

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective? How were they tested and approved?

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COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized for use have gone through clinical trials involving tens of thousands of participants to determine their safety and efficacy.

The known and potential benefits of approved vaccines outweigh the known and potential harms of becoming infected with COVID-19.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for two COVID-19 vaccines which have been shown to be safe and effective as determined by data from the manufacturers and findings from clinical trials.

More information from the FDA about these two vaccines can be found here:

For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)

For the Moderna vaccine, please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Moderna Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)

Clinical Trials

Several vaccines are in Phase 3 clinical trials and the FDA has issued EUAs for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and for the Moderna vaccine. For more details on the vaccine approval process, refer to this [infographic](#) and this [fact sheet](#).

Clinical trials are research studies performed in people that are aimed at evaluating a medical, surgical, or behavioral intervention. They are the primary way that researchers find out if a new treatment, like a new drug, vaccine, or medical device is safe and effective in people.

Currently, clinical trials are evaluating COVID-19 vaccines in many thousands of study participants to generate scientific data and other information for the FDA to determine their safety and efficacy. These clinical trials are being conducted according to rigorous safety standards. For detailed information, [visit this CDC page](#).

Side Effects

After receiving an injection of a COVID-19 vaccine, you will be observed for 15 minutes by healthcare staff to monitor any side effects. Observation may be longer (30 minutes) if you have a history of anaphylaxis.

Like many vaccines, a COVID-19 vaccine may cause some temporary discomfort. In addition to a sore arm, side effects of the vaccines may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, injection site swelling, injection site redness, nausea, feeling unwell, and swollen lymph nodes.

There is a small chance that vaccines could cause a severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour, which is why all individuals should be observed for at least 15 minutes after vaccination and 30 minutes if they have a history of a severe allergic reaction due to any cause.

COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

Source: https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Public_FAQ.pdf; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.htm>

How will New Jersey distribute a COVID-19 vaccine? Is there a plan?

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New Jersey will roll out COVID-19 vaccines step-by-step to serve all adults who live, work, or are being educated in the state. While the State's current plan is highlighted below, the plan will continually be updated in response to the changing circumstances of the pandemic.

New Jersey's COVID-19 vaccination program aims to:

- Provide equitable access to all who live, work, and/or are educated in New Jersey
- Achieve community protection, assuming vaccine effectiveness, availability, and uptake
- Build sustainable trust in COVID-19 and other vaccines

The State's goal is to vaccinate 70 percent of the adult population – or 4.7 million adults – within six months.

Vaccination Phases

Currently, vaccines are available to those who are in **Phase 1A** which includes paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials as well as residents and staff of long-term congregate settings. Once vaccine availability expands, vaccination will advance to Phase 1B, then Phase 1C, and then Phase 2.

Currently, **Phase 1B** of vaccination will include frontline essential workers and individuals over 75; **Phase 1C** will include other essential workers, adults 65-74, and persons aged 16-64 with medical conditions that increase the risk for severe COVID-19.

Following these phases, the general public (Phase 2) will be eligible for vaccination.

For more information about the phased approach and priority groups, refer to this [Health Department document](#).

Vaccine Distribution

New Jersey was awarded over 400,000 vaccines in the month of December. Of that, approximately 120,000 doses have been reserved for long-term care facilities and 280,000 doses have been allocated to hospitals and community sites.

New Jersey was awarded an additional 106,000 for the first week of January. Of that, approximately 53,000 doses have been reserved for long-term care facilities with another 53,000 being allocated to hospitals and community sites.

Vaccinations began on December 15th in New Jersey hospitals for paid and unpaid persons serving in their health facilities.

New Jersey is partnering with Rite Aid to provide vaccinations to home care and hospice staff. Information about scheduling appointments is being provided through home health agencies and their industry associations.

As of December 30, through the Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with CVS and Walgreens, New Jersey has over 500 long-term care facilities scheduled - including the State's three veterans memorial homes - and over 100,000 residents and staff slated to receive vaccinations through the beginning of February 2021. Additional sites will be added in the coming weeks.

After nursing home residents and staff are vaccinated, CVS and Walgreens will begin to vaccinate thousands of residents and staff in other congregate settings including Assisted Living facilities, the five state developmental centers, federal housing for seniors and group homes and other long-term residential facilities. New Jersey also has a network of community vaccination sites for vulnerable residents who live in congregate settings not eligible for this federal partnership.

New Jersey is also developing an extensive network of vaccination sites to serve those currently eligible for vaccination. By early January, the vaccination sites network will include acute care hospitals, large state-coordinated mega sites, county/local sites, retail pharmacies and other medical locations. At this time, New Jersey cannot arrange for all groups to receive distributions directly, so vaccine recipients may need to go off-site to be vaccinated.

Six mega sites throughout New Jersey will serve as vaccination hubs for phased priority groups, part of a critical network of over 200 sites tasked with carrying out the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan fairly and equitably:

- Atlantic County: Atlantic City Convention Center
- Bergen County: Racetrack at Meadowlands, East Rutherford
- Burlington County: Moorestown Mall
- Gloucester County: Rowan College of South Jersey, Sewell
- Middlesex County: New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center, Edison
- Morris County: Rockaway Townsquare

The six state-coordinated sites are expected to begin opening in early January and will immediately be in position to vaccinate front-line healthcare workers and then continue in a phased approach depending on the supply of vaccine to New Jersey. After these phases are complete, then the general public will be eligible for vaccination. The timing of the progression among the groups depends on the supply of vaccine to the state balanced by the demand in various phases.

Scheduling A Vaccination

New Jersey will launch a statewide vaccine scheduling system to help consumers connect with identified nearby points of dispensing sites. This online portal will enable the various groups in the initial phases and eventually the general public to register and then find a vaccination site, pre-register, and schedule an appointment. Some vaccination sites may offer walk-up/on-site registration as well when doses are more readily available

Vaccination Data

[Executive Order No. 207](#) changes inclusion into the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS) from an opt-in to an opt-out program for any resident who chooses to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. This means that individuals who wish to be vaccinated against COVID-19 do not have to first opt-in to the system to make sure that their two-dose regimen is properly tracked and managed. 30 days after the current public health emergency ends, individuals who enrolled due to the COVID-19 vaccine will be afforded the opportunity to withdraw from the system. **The Executive Order does not force anyone to receive the vaccine.**

NJIS will securely store the vaccine recipient's name, address, date of birth, race, ethnicity, and gender. These are standard data elements that have been used across vaccines administered in New Jersey. These will be requested during pre-registration and/or on-site. Information about the vaccine provider, substance, and administration will be collected from the POD personnel. There are other data that New Jerseyans may be asked and that will not be stored in NJIS.

Depending on the POD and its scheduling process, New Jerseyans can also expect to provide additional demographic and occupational data to ensure equitable and efficient scheduling of vaccinations. These data points will be informed by ACIP recommendations about prioritization (e.g. Phase 1A will include healthcare personnel).

Finally, medical screening questions will be asked to assess eligibility under the EUA and ACIP recommendations specific to the vaccine product offered at the point of dispensing.

All data collected can only be used for public health purposes, like ensuring that the same person returns for a second dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine at the right time interval. Data cannot be used for civil or criminal enforcement and cannot be used for immigration enforcement.

For more information about NJIS, refer to NJ DOH's [Keeping Track of COVID-19 Vaccine through NJIS](#) document.

The Department is finalizing a public dashboard which will show doses administered and some demographic information. Data will be updated weekly and refined over time.

Source: [COVID-19 Briefings](#); [DOH COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#); [DOH Health Commissioner Persichilli's Remarks 12/28/20](#)

Where, how, and when can I get vaccinated?

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Scheduling A Vaccination

Coming Soon: New Jersey will launch a statewide vaccine scheduling system to help consumers connect with identified nearby points of dispensing sites. This online portal will enable the various groups in the initial phases and eventually the general public to find a vaccination site, pre-register, and schedule an appointment. Some vaccination sites may offer walk-up/on-site registration as well when doses are more readily available.

Currently, Phase 1A individuals can get vaccinated by [making an appointment](#) at one of the designated sites found on [this page](#).

Note: All sites in New Jersey are currently only serving people who are part of Phase 1A. No professional or medical documentation is required.

Even if you are a healthcare worker or long-term care resident in Phase 1A, an appointment may not be available to you in the first weeks of the vaccination campaign due to significantly limited vaccine availability. NJDOH hopes to be able to serve all healthcare workers who wish to be vaccinated by the end of January 2021, pending vaccine availability.

Vaccination Locations

New Jersey is developing an extensive network of vaccination sites to serve those currently eligible for vaccination. By early January, the vaccination sites network will include acute care hospitals, large state-coordinated mega sites, county/local sites, retail pharmacies and other medical locations. At this time, New Jersey cannot arrange for all groups to receive distributions directly, so vaccine recipients may need to go off-site to be vaccinated.

For example, during Phase 1A, hospital workers and volunteers have an opportunity to receive the vaccine at the hospital where they work or volunteer. All other healthcare workers and volunteers, including those outside of hospitals and long-term care, will be able to receive the vaccine through other vaccination sites at pharmacies, urgent care centers, federally qualified health centers, hospitals, local health departments, other state- and county-run sites, and other medical clinics.

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