



Vaccine Facts for Jewish Faith Communities

Do COVID-19 vaccines contain animal products? The **Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech** vaccines in the U.S. do not contain any ingredients that come from animals. There are no pig or cow products in these vaccines. They contain messenger RNA, water, sugar, salts and lipids (fats) that are not derived from animals. The **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine contains inactive adenovirus, salts, sugar, and an emulsifier, none of which are derived from animals.

What do faith leaders say about the ethics of receiving a vaccine?

[Responsum 5957.10](#) from the **Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)** states: Jewish tradition would define immunization as part of the *mitzvah* of healing and recognize it as a required measure, since we are not entitled to endanger ourselves or the children for whom we are responsible by refusing proven medical treatment. <https://tinyurl.com/11wee315>

[Vaccine guidance](#) presented by the **Orthodox Union** and the **Rabbinical Council of America** concludes that “the Torah obligation to preserve our lives and the lives of others requires us to vaccinate for COVID-19 as soon as a vaccine becomes available.” tinyurl.com/3wmfopte

In a [recent joint editorial](#), Rabbi Moshe Hauer, executive vice president of the **Orthodox Union** and Walter Kim, president of **the National Association of Evangelicals** said “Our congregations and their members are eager to participate in the vaccine program with the strong encouragement of their leaders.” tinyurl.com/e4k bk7yq

Frequently asked questions

Is the vaccine safe? Yes. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) requires rigorous safety testing before it will approve any vaccine. Tens of thousands of people — including people in Oregon — from many backgrounds, ages and communities of color, participated in vaccine testing. These studies were done to make sure the vaccines meet safety standards and protect people of different ages, races and ethnicities.

Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition? Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with underlying medical conditions like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19. People with these medical conditions were also part of vaccine research.

What about side effects? According to the FDA, the most common side effects in the COVID-19 vaccine trials included pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle pain and joint pain.

These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a few days. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Is there a microchip in the vaccine so the government can track me? COVID-19 vaccines don't contain a microchip to track people. Vaccine shipping boxes are tracked, as any other shipment, to make sure they're distributed where needed and to prevent theft. There is also a record of where you got your vaccine to make sure you get all your doses.

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