



Frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines in Oregon

This FAQ answers the most frequent questions we have received from people with disabilities.

Q1. Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

A1. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to keep yourself and the people you love safe from COVID-19. You may be at a higher risk of getting COVID-19 if you live in a congregate care setting or are in close contact with unvaccinated care providers. You may also be at higher risk of severe illness if you have diabetes, cancer, heart disease, obesity or an intellectual or developmental disability. The vaccine will make your body stronger to fight COVID-19 and protect you from getting sick. And if you protect yourself from COVID-19, you'll also be helping to protect those around you.

Q2. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

A2. All COVID-19 vaccines have been tested to make sure they are safe and effective. Tens of thousands of people from many backgrounds, ages and communities participated in vaccine testing. Millions of people have now gotten the COVID-19 vaccines. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Q3. Did people with disabilities or complex medical needs participate in the clinical trials?

A3. Yes. The vaccine was tested in several tens of thousands of participants with underlying conditions, but the trial reports don't specify exactly which conditions.

Q4. Can the vaccine be administered somewhere other than the arm?

A4. Yes. The vaccination should be given into a muscle (i.e., intramuscular injection). For adults, the deltoid muscle (in the upper arm) is recommended for routine intramuscular vaccinations. The anterolateral thigh can also be used.

Q5. What if I'm currently taking medications? Are the vaccines still safe for me?

A5. There are no data available currently about interactions of the vaccine with any drugs or medications. Experts think the vaccine is safe even if you're taking other medicines. The vaccine may not work as well if you're taking medicines that suppress the immune system.

Q6. What if I have an existing health condition? Are the vaccines still safe for me?

A6. Yes. Any FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine can be administered to people with underlying medical conditions who have no [contraindications](#) to vaccination. Any specific concerns should be discussed with your doctor.

Q7. Will the vaccine protect me from getting COVID-19?

A7. Although protection isn't 100%, all of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States are highly effective at preventing serious disease and hospitalization.

Q8. What are the COVID-19 vaccine's side effects?

A8. After you get your vaccine, you may have a sore spot on your arm where you got the vaccine. Some people will also feel tired or achy or have a fever for a few days. This doesn't mean you are sick. It means the vaccine is working to keep your body healthy. Serious side effects are rare.

Q9. How do the vaccines work?

A9. The vaccines tell our cells how to make a harmless protein. Our immune system sees the proteins and builds antibodies that will remember how to fight the COVID-19 virus if we get infected.

Q10. I already had COVID-19. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

A10. Yes. We do not yet know how lasting or strong natural immunity is. Even if you've been sick with COVID-19, the vaccine will help protect you against infection from new variants too. Wait until you have fully recovered from COVID-19 before you get a vaccine.

Q11. Where can I get the vaccine?

A11. You can call 211 or 866-698-6155 or check out the [vaccine locator map](#) to find the vaccine provider nearest to you. The map is available in 12 languages. OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Q12. How will I know if the vaccine site is accessible?

A12. Providers of the COVID-19 vaccine are required to be ADA-compliant.

Q13. What do I do if I show up for an appointment and the site cannot accommodate my needs?

A13. Contact [OHA's Ombuds Program](#) by calling the message line at 877-642-0450 TTY 711 or emailing OHA.OmbudsOffice@dhsosha.state.or.us

Q14. What if I am unable to leave my home? How can I get vaccinated?

A14. Contact your [local public health authority](#). Medicaid consumers should consult their case manager.

Q15. How much will it cost? Do I need to have insurance?

A15. The vaccine is free for everyone. You will not be charged for the appointment or the vaccine. You do not need health insurance to get a vaccine, but if you have health insurance, bring your card. The provider may bill your insurance for the cost of administering the vaccine.

Q16. Do I need to bring identification to prove my eligibility?

A16. No. You do not need to bring proof of eligibility. You may be asked to provide personal identification, but you will not be turned away if you do not have identification.

Q17. Do I need to provide a social security number to get a vaccine?

A17. No. You do not need a social security number.

Q18. What is in the COVID-19 vaccines?

A18. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are made from “RNA,” which tells your body to make a harmless part of the virus, to which you will develop immunity. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses a virus that makes us develop immunity to COVID-19. The vaccines do not change your DNA and do not contain a live virus or any animal materials.

Q19. Do I need a second shot of the vaccine? How will I know when and where to go?

A19. For the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, you will need to get two shots. You get the second shot 3 or 4 weeks after you get the first one. It is important for you to get both shots. The clinic where you got your first shot will contact you to schedule your second shot. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one shot.

You will be informed which vaccine you receive and what kind of follow-up, if any, you need to have. You will receive proof of your vaccination. Keep your proof of vaccination card safe.

Q20. What do I do if I lose my vaccination card?

A20. If you have lost or damaged your vaccination card, you can use your record of vaccination as proof. Here’s how to get your record (replacement CDC cards are not available):

- Check with your health care provider, or their website, for your immunization record.
- Follow the instructions on the [OHA Immunization Resources](#) page. It may take 5 days to get your record.
- Call 211 for help in languages other than English.

Q21. After I get the vaccine, can I stop wearing a face mask and start gathering with groups of people again?

A21. After you are fully vaccinated (two weeks after your final vaccine), you can visit indoors with others without wearing a mask or physical distancing. You may still need to wear a mask in certain locations.

Q22. I'm fully vaccinated and immunocompromised. Should I continue to wear a mask around others?

A22. Vaccines may be less effective in people with immunocompromising conditions or who take immunosuppressive medications. Individuals should discuss with their healthcare providers their personal risk based on their medical history and if they should wear a mask in public.

Q23. Can my support person take me to get vaccinated?

A23. Yes. Support staff may use regularly scheduled time to take you to your vaccination appointment. For Medicaid members, extra support hours may be available. Contact your case worker for more information.

Q24. Can I have other support resources with me, including but not limited to service animals, communication cards, translators, etc.?

A24. Yes.

Q25. Can my support person get vaccinated at the same time I do?

A25. Yes. No appointments are needed at many pharmacies. For in-home Medicaid members, our Vaccine Navigators can also schedule both of you at the same time. Call 503-890-0491.

Q26. Can my support person stay with me after I get my shot in case of side effects?

A26. Yes. Support staff may use regularly scheduled time to stay with you after your vaccination. For Medicaid members, extra support hours may be available. Contact your case worker for more information.

Q27. Where can I get more information?

A27. For more information, go to covidvaccine.oregon.gov (English) or vacunacovid.oregon.gov (Spanish). You can also call 211 or 866-698-6155 for information in any language.

Disability Rights Oregon, Know Your Rights: <https://www.droregon.org/covid-19-rights>

ODDS Know Your Rights Resource Sheet:
<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/ODDS%20Resource%20Library/Covid-Medical-Rights-Resources-Sheet.pdf>

If you have concerns or complaints, contact [OHA's Ombuds Program](#) by calling the message line at 877-642-0450 TTY 711 or emailing OHA.OmbudsOffice@dhsoha.state.or.us.

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