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# COVID-19 VACCINES

A Healthcare Worker's Booklet





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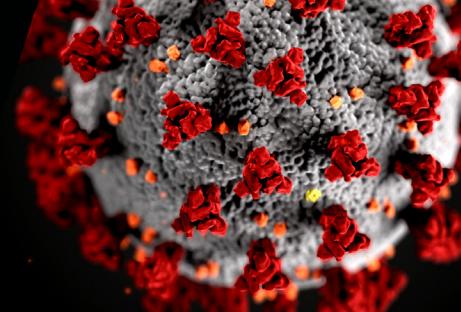
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A Note from Your UC Health Leaders .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Getting The Vaccine.....</b>	<b>2</b>
• What You Should Know	
• Where to Get Vaccinated	
<b>About The Vaccine.....</b>	<b>3</b>
• How They Work	
• Side Effects	
<b>Safety.....</b>	<b>5</b>
• Development	
• Health Conditions, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding	
<b>Frequently Asked Questions.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>More Information.....</b>	<b>9</b>

This document is intended to provide information about the COVID-19 vaccine. We will update this booklet as new information becomes available. Please note the publication date on the cover.



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Since March 2020, COVID-19 has touched every part of our lives. We've been challenged like never before.

Yet, you've responded, time and again, to the needs of our community. You have been a source of hope for our friends and neighbors.

The COVID-19 vaccine is how we will move past the pandemic.

Science has demonstrated that COVID-19 vaccinations have proven to be safe and effective. Overwhelmingly, they protect people from hospitalization, ICU-level care and death.

**To keep you and our patients safe, all employees, clinicians, volunteers and partners at UC Health will be required to receive COVID-19 vaccination.**

As the region's adult academic health system, it is our privilege to care for some of the most critically ill patients in our community – and it is our responsibility to do all that we can to protect them and protect each of you.



*Richard P. Lofgren*

Richard P. Lofgren, MD  
President & CEO



*Evie Alessandini*

Evie Alessandini, MD  
Executive Vice President, CMO  
and Interim Chief Operating Officer



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## GETTING THE VACCINE

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

**The COVID-19 vaccine is required for UC Health employees, clinicians, volunteers and partners.**

As a healthcare provider, UC Health already requires vaccination for other communicable diseases such as hepatitis and influenza. It is our responsibility to do all that we can to protect our patients and employees.

**You need the vaccine even if you've already had COVID-19.**

Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again. Natural immunity varies in every person and does not guarantee protection, particularly from emerging variants of the virus. Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19.

**Booster shots are not needed at this time, but UC Health will continue to follow the latest scientific guidance.**

The FDA, CDC and NIH are engaged in a science-based, rigorous process to consider whether or when a booster might be necessary at a future date. UC Health will continue to follow the science regarding COVID-19.

A third dose is authorized for people who have an immune-compromised condition. If you were vaccinated previously, you would be recommended to get an extra dose of the vaccine you got previously. Ask your doctor if you have an immune condition that might qualify you for an extra dose.

**You should still follow UC Health's PPE and Safety Protocol even after you're fully vaccinated.**

### WHERE TO GET VACCINATED

You can get your vaccine from UC Health or through a provider of your choice.

#### How to schedule your vaccine at UC Health:

- Current patients eligible per the state of Ohio's distribution plan may be able to view current vaccine appointments in My UC Health (MyChart).
- Anyone eligible can also schedule appointments by calling 513-584-DOSE (3673).
- UC Health also offers no-appointment, walk-in vaccinations, [on days and times specified on the webpage](#).
- Recipients do NOT have to be an Ohio resident or a UC Health patient to schedule an appointment.
- Depending on our supply, you may be able to choose between a one-dose and a two-dose vaccine.
- For vaccination center locations and maps, information about preparing for a vaccine appointment and more, please visit UC Health's [vaccine distribution webpage](#).

#### Find other vaccine providers:

Find a full list of Ohio vaccine providers on the [Ohio Department of Health's website](#).



## ABOUT THE VACCINE

The vaccine is very safe. It is also proven to be highly effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death.

### HOW THEY WORK

When your body identifies a virus, it creates defense molecules called antibodies that attack and destroy these germs. Your body keeps these antibodies, which remember how to protect you if they meet the virus again. It also develops immune cells that remember a virus and can clear it from your body should it try to attack you again.

This is called **immunity**, and it's why you often don't get sick from the same illness twice.

Vaccines work by injecting material that tricks your body into thinking you have virus. In response, your body creates antibodies and other immune cells that are specifically designed to attack this virus.

If you are exposed to the coronavirus, you are protected from getting sick because you already have antibodies caused by the vaccine.

### Protection Against Variant Strains

Vaccination does protect everyone from catching a new strain or variant of COVID-19. Vaccines are designed to protect you from getting sick should you be exposed or infected with viruses like COVID-19. However, some variants might cause illness in some people after they are fully vaccinated if the variants are circulating in the community. So, if you've been vaccinated and you are exposed to the delta variant, the chances of you becoming sick enough to go to the hospital are very low.

### SIDE EFFECTS

#### Short-Term

The vaccine is designed to trigger an immune reaction in your body. These responses are the body's way of defending itself, and they can cause you to feel uncomfortable and sick. Therefore, you may experience:

- Fatigue.
- Headache.
- Fever.
- Muscle aches.
- Soreness at the site of the injection (your arm).

Talk to your doctor about taking over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin or antihistamines, for any pain and discomfort you may experience after getting vaccinated. You can take these medications to relieve post-vaccination side effects if you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally.

It is not recommended you take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects.



## Long-Term

Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely unlikely following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccine monitoring has historically shown that side effects generally happen within six weeks of receiving a vaccine dose.

Millions of people have received COVID-19 vaccines, and no long-term side effects have been detected.

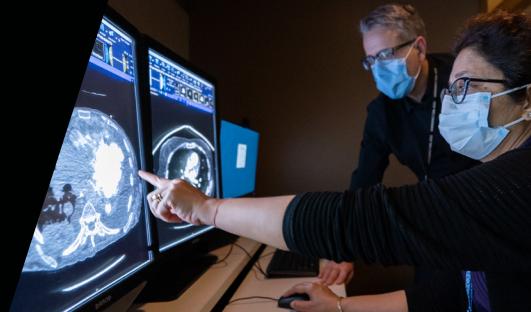
## Rare

**Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)**—After receiving the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, there is risk for a rare but serious adverse event—blood clots with low platelets (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome, or TTS). Women younger than 50 years old should especially be aware of their increased risk for this rare adverse event. There are other COVID-19 vaccines available for which this risk has not been seen.

This adverse event is rare, occurring at a rate of about 7 per 1 million vaccinated women between 18 and 49 years old, according to the CDC. For women 50 years and older and men of all ages, this adverse event is even more rare.

**Myocarditis and Pericarditis**—Cases of myocarditis and pericarditis in adolescents and young adults have been reported more often after getting the second dose than after the first dose of one of these two mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. These reports are rare and the known and potential benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks, including the possible risk of myocarditis or pericarditis. Most people with myocarditis or pericarditis associated with COVID-19 vaccination get better on their own within a few days.





## SAFETY

### DEVELOPMENT

#### Were the vaccines rushed?

The vaccine is new, but the science isn't. Scientists have created vaccines for more than 100 years.

The COVID-19 vaccines were developed and tested through clinical trials in the exact same way as other vaccines — no corners were cut.

This vaccine was created more quickly than others in the past because the world came together and focused all its time and resources into this important cause. Factors that sped up development:

- People were eager to volunteer for trials, so it didn't take as long as normal to recruit study participants.
- Financial resources were granted by many governments.
- No steps were skipped, but many steps were done at the same time rather than one after the other.

#### Vaccine Ingredients

Clinical trials, with extremely strict legal requirements, verified the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. That includes ensuring the ingredients themselves are safe. Many of the ingredients are found in other vaccines, common medications and even in the foods we eat.

#### Some ingredients in the vaccines:

- **Messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA):** Active ingredient. Genetic material that contains instructions on how our body makes the protein that triggers an immune response to protect our body from the virus.
- **Adenovirus vector:** Active ingredient. Weakened strain of an adenovirus that carries genetic material to instruct our bodies to make the spike protein resembling the coronavirus.
- **Lipids:** Surround and protect the mRNA as it is transported to the cell.
- **Acid stabilizer:** Helps maintain the stability of the vaccine.
- **Acid (acetic acid, found in vinegar):** Helps maintain the stability of the vaccine.
- **Salt:** Helps maintain the stability of the vaccine, helps balance the acidity in the body.
- **Sugar:** Helps maintain the stability of the vaccine, helps the molecule keep its shape and keep the vaccine effective after it's made.

### HEALTH CONDITIONS, PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to most people with underlying medical conditions.

If you are pregnant, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. Based on how these vaccines work in the body, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a risk for people who are pregnant. However, there are currently limited data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant people.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your health and the vaccine.



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine required for UC Health employees?**

Yes. As part of our commitment to delivering the safest environment for our team members and our patients, beginning this fall, the COVID-19 vaccine will be required for all employees, clinicians, volunteers and partners at UC Health.

As a healthcare provider, UC Health already requires vaccination for other communicable diseases such as hepatitis and influenza – and, now, COVID-19. It is our responsibility to do all that we can to protect our patients and employees.

### **How do I know the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?**

Science has demonstrated that COVID-19 vaccinations have proven to be safe and effective. They reduce both the risk of becoming infected, the severity of the illness and the likelihood of spreading the infection to others. Among unvaccinated individuals, COVID-19 infections pose a substantial risk of severe illness and death and may lead to long-term adverse impacts to health. These risks are higher among those individuals with certain underlying health conditions, like many patients you care for every day.

Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines under the most intense safety monitoring in U.S. history.

Learn how we know the vaccines are safe on the [CDC's website](#).

### **Is the vaccine effective?**

Yes, it is proven to be highly effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death.

Learn how we know the vaccines are effective on the [CDC's website](#).

### **Do vaccines protect against the delta variant?**

Current information suggests that COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States offer protection against most variants. However, some variants might cause illness in some people after they are fully vaccinated. Vaccination against COVID-19 helps decrease community spread and protects vaccinated individuals against becoming seriously ill if they become infected.

### **Can the vaccine cause COVID-19?**

No. Many vaccines do not contain the virus, but instead contain materials that tell the body to create molecules that mimic the virus. **It is impossible for these molecules to cause COVID-19.**

### **What are the side effects?**

The vaccine is designed to trigger an immune reaction in your body. These responses are the body's way of defending itself, and they can cause you to feel uncomfortable and sick. Therefore, you may experience:

- Fatigue.
- Headache.
- Fever.
- Muscle aches.
- Soreness at the site of the injection (your arm).

Talk to your doctor about taking over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin, or antihistamines, for any pain and discomfort you may experience after getting vaccinated. You can take these medications to relieve post-vaccination side effects if you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally.

It is not recommended you take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects.

### **Is the vaccine free?**

Yes. There will be no out-of-pocket cost for anyone, including those without health insurance.



### **How do we know the vaccine is safe if we don't know the long-term effects?**

Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely unlikely following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccine monitoring has historically shown that side effects generally happen within six weeks of receiving a vaccine dose.

Millions of people have received COVID-19 vaccines, and no long-term side effects have been detected.

### **Was vaccine development rushed?**

The COVID-19 vaccines were developed and tested through clinical trials in the exact same way as other vaccines — no corners were cut.

This vaccine was created more quickly than others in the past because the world came together and focused all its time and resources into this important cause. Factors that sped up development:

- People were eager to volunteer for trials, so it didn't take as long as normal to recruit study participants.
- Financial resources were granted by many governments.
- No steps were skipped, but many were done at the same time rather than one after the other.

### **Isn't my immune system strong enough to handle COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a serious disease with the potential for complications, lingering health impacts and sometimes death. A new vaccine approved through safe and strict monitoring is much safer than getting COVID-19, which can cause hospitalization and death.

With the delta variant, getting vaccinated is more urgent than ever. The highest spread of cases and severe outcomes is happening in places with low vaccination rates and among unvaccinated people.

### **Is it safe for me to get the vaccine if I have a medical condition?**

COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to most people with underlying medical conditions. [Read more on the CDC's website.](#)

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your health and the vaccine.

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for pregnant women?**

If you are pregnant, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. Based on how these vaccines work in the body, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a risk for people who are pregnant. However, there are currently limited data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant people.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your health and the vaccine.

### **I just had a baby, and I am breastfeeding, will the vaccine be passed to my baby?**

Lactating women may receive the vaccine. There is some data suggesting that protective antibodies may be passed through breast milk.

### **Is it safe for me to get a vaccine if I would like to become pregnant in the future?**

Yes. If you are trying to become pregnant now or want to get pregnant in the future, you may get a COVID-19 vaccine.

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. In addition, there is no evidence that female or male fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your health and the vaccine.

### **Do I need the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?**

Yes. You should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible—although rare—that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again. Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19.



#### **I recently had COVID-19. How long do I need to wait until I receive the vaccine?**

CDC recommends that everyone receive a COVID-19 vaccine regardless of their history of COVID-19 infection. Vaccination should be deferred until you have recovered from the acute illness and after meeting criteria to discontinue isolation.

#### **I had COVID and received monoclonal antibody therapy or convalescent plasma as part of my treatment. Should I get the vaccine?**

CDC recommends deferring vaccination for at least 90 days.

#### **Do you expect employees will be required to get COVID-19 booster shots every year?**

We will continue to follow guidance from the CDC, FDA and NIH regarding COVID-19 vaccine booster shots.

A third dose is authorized for people who have an immune-compromised condition. If you were vaccinated previously, you would be recommended to get an extra dose of the vaccine you got previously. Ask your doctor if you have an immune condition that might qualify you for an extra dose.

#### **Can I stop wearing PPE at work after I receive the vaccine?**

At this time, you should continue to follow UC Health PPE policies while at work.

#### **Can I get other vaccines, like the influenza vaccine, around the same time I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. There is no waiting period for any other vaccines between or after doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

#### **How many doses do I need?**

It depends on which vaccine you receive. Vaccines work when you have enough antibodies (defense molecules) to stop the virus if you get exposed to it. Studies for some vaccines showed you need two doses to ensure your body has the right amount of antibodies. Other vaccines were proven effective in one dose. If you're scheduled to receive a second dose, please make sure you get it so that you can become immune to COVID-19.

#### **Do I have a choice on which vaccine to receive?**

Yes, at UC Health we primarily administer the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, and you have the choice of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine or the one-dose J&J vaccine. If you receive vaccination through a community health provider, supplies and vaccine options may vary.

#### **Will patients and visitors be required to be vaccinated?**

While we strongly encourage all our community members to receive the vaccine, we cannot require vaccinations for patients or visitors.

To help maintain a safe and healing environment, anyone on a UC Health campus is required to wear a mask and follow any other applicable safety protocols. We will also continue to evaluate our visitor restrictions and update as needed.

#### **Are there enough vaccines available for our entire UC Health team?**

Our UC Health Pharmacy team has done a tremendous job in providing vaccinations for our employees, clinicians, patients and community members. We continue to receive additional vaccine supply, and have more than enough to continue administer to our team and our friends and neighbors.

UC Health employees and clinicians also have the option to receive their vaccine at any retail clinic or pharmacy.

#### **What if I participated in a COVID-19 study?**

All employees and partners who participated in a COVID-19 vaccine study prior to April 1, 2021 should have received the vaccination with an active vaccine (not placebo) if they completed or remain active in the trial. Those who are enrolled in a COVID-19 Vaccine Study must submit their CDC approved or equivalent card with name, date of birth, lot number and date vaccination was administered. The same expectations apply to these employees.

#### **I thought the virus mutations made it weaker, with less serious effects?**

The recent mutations we have seen have all acted, and affected patients, differently. However, the delta variant is presenting real challenges for our region and our healthcare system. Hospitalizations for patients with COVID-19 continue to dramatically increase in our region. From Aug. 3 to Aug. 10, we saw the following:

Cincinnati Area (Region 6)

- Hospitalizations: Increased from 134 to 183
- ICUs: Increased from 37 to 64

#### **People are still getting COVID-19 despite having been vaccinated. If that is the case, why do I need to receive the vaccine?**

Some vaccinated individuals are testing positive for COVID-19 with "breakthrough" cases. The vaccines were developed to prevent people from becoming seriously ill from the virus. And, overwhelmingly, data has shown that they protect people from hospitalization, ICU-level care and death.

Additionally, vaccinated individuals transmit less COVID-19 delta variant to others by between 50-80% reduction. An unvaccinated person may infect, on average, 5-8 people, whereas a vaccinated person might only infect 1-4 people.



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## MORE INFORMATION

### UC Health Contacts

- UC Health and UCP Self-Exposure & Symptoms Reporting (REDCap):  
Email: covid-redcap@uchealth.com  
Online: <https://is.gd/UCHealthCOVID>  
For assistance, please email UCH-Employee-Health@uchealth.com.

### The Link: UC Health's Source of News and Information for Employees

Download "The Link" mobile app available in the App Store or Google Play, or view it on any computer or device at <https://thelink.uchealth.com/>. You'll have access to all the latest UC Health news and information wherever you are – no need to be on the UC Health network. Once you visit The Link, follow these easy steps to log in:

- Click on the green "Sign In" button from the home page.
- Select "Employee/Clinician Sign-In" and enter your User ID or Epic ID and password.
- You only have to request a user account if you are a non-employee and do not have a User ID or Epic ID.

### Other Resources

[CDC Information on COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

[Ohio Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#)

