



Faith-Based Toolkit—Frequently Asked Questions

Disease Information

What is COVID-19?

There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

Why is COVID-19 considered to be a pandemic?

A pandemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area (such as multiple countries or continents) and typically affects a significant proportion of the population. Many people are getting sick, and even dying, from this disease since COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that our bodies are not used to fighting.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Chills/shaking
- Muscle pain/headache
- New loss of taste/smell
- Stuffy or runny nose.

Most people have mild symptoms and can recover at home. If you have difficulty breathing, high fever, or other unusual or concerning symptoms, you should **call** your health care provider right away.

Who is at severe risk if they get sick with COVID-19?

People at increased risk include:

- Older adults
- People of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions

[Pregnant people](#) are also at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from [racial and ethnic minority groups](#) at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.

In addition to those at increased risk, there are [certain groups of people who require extra precautions during the pandemic](#).

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread when people are in close contact with each other. That means they are less than 6 ft or 2 arm lengths.

COVID-19 is spread when infected people cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe. Particles called droplets can hang in the air and may travel a few feet. People can get infected when they inhale these particles. That is why part of the prevention for COVID-19 is wearing masks and physically staying apart from others.

I understand certain facilities are closed to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Is my church/temple/mosque open?

Yes, houses of worship can open for in-person services. Individuals should check with their houses of worship to see if in-person religious services have resumed.

While services can resume, houses of worship must comply with the [limits on indoor gatherings](#). Indoor gatherings for religious services and celebrations, including wedding ceremonies, funerals and memorial services that involve a religious service, must be limited to 50 percent of a room's capacity. All attendees at indoor gatherings must wear face coverings and stay six feet apart.

General outdoor gatherings must be limited to 200 people. There is no limit for outdoor gatherings for wedding ceremonies, funerals, memorial services, religious activities, or political activities.

To save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19, get the COVID-19 Vaccine, [wear a mask](#), wash your hands, practice social distancing, and stay home if you are sick. **Face coverings are required** [in indoor public spaces](#) and in outdoor public spaces when social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Vaccine Information

Is a COVID-19 vaccine necessary?

Yes! COVID-19 can be a minor illness in some or lead to severe disease or even death in previously healthy people. This means, everyone should take the virus seriously! It is believed that the more people who get vaccinated, the less sickness will be in our communities. Many treatments and medications are being studied, but there is no cure. Prevention is key.

Vaccination is an important step in helping to prevent this illness and its potentially devastating consequences.

How much will a vaccine reduce the risk of COVID-19 and its complications?

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Moderna vaccine has 94.1% efficacy at preventing symptomatic cases. The Pfizer vaccine has 95% efficacy. The Janssen/Johnson & Johnson (J&J) one-dose vaccine has a 72% efficacy rate in the U.S. clinical trials. Additionally, the J&J vaccine was approximately 77% effective in preventing severe/critical COVID-19 occurring at least 14 days after vaccination and 85% effective in preventing severe/critical COVID-19 occurring at least 28 days after vaccination.

At this time, data are not available to determine how long the vaccines will provide protection, nor is there evidence that the vaccine prevents transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person. For these reasons, preventive actions like social distancing and masking will still be necessary as vaccination will be just one of the many tools needed to help fight COVID-19.

How many shots of COVID vaccine will be needed?

Both Pfizer and Moderna require two shots. These vaccines are not interchangeable meaning you need to receive two doses of the same vaccine. The J&J vaccine is only one dose.

Is there a cost for the COVID-19 vaccine?

There are no out-of-pocket costs for the COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines will be made available to individuals regardless of insurance coverage status. Individuals won't pay coinsurance, deductibles, or copayments. Providers that administer vaccinations to patients without health insurance or whose insurance does not provide coverage of vaccination administration fees may not charge enrollees directly for any vaccine administration costs.

If I get vaccinated do I still need to wear a mask/face covering in public gatherings?

Yes, you will still need to wear a mask and follow other precautions. The vaccine keeps you from getting sick. It is believed that the more people who get vaccinated, the less sickness will be in our communities. We don't know yet if the vaccine prevents a person from spreading the virus. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines boost your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like masks and physical distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to, or spreading, the virus. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

What are some of the vaccine side effects?

The most common side effects are injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, and joint pain. Some people in the clinical trials have reported fever. Side effects are more common after the second dose; younger adults, who have more robust immune systems, reported more side effects than older adults.

As people get vaccinated, CDC, FDA, and other federal partners will use the following existing, robust systems and data sources to conduct ongoing safety monitoring. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>.

How can I schedule an appointment to get vaccinated?

If you are eligible to receive a vaccine, there are multiple ways to get vaccinated including:

1. Register and make an appointment through the NJ Vaccine Scheduling System. [Register here.](#)
2. Make an appointment directly with a vaccination location. [View locations here.](#)
3. Seniors 65+ can call the senior-specific hotline at 856-249-7007 from 8am to 8pm to schedule dedicated vaccine appointments
4. If you work or volunteer at a select healthcare facility, make an appointment through your place of work.
5. Veterans who receive care from VA health facilities or live in VA long-term care facilities may be eligible for vaccines through the VA. [Learn more here.](#)

Even if you are eligible for receiving a vaccine, an appointment may not be immediately available to you due to significantly limited vaccine availability. New Jersey has developed an extensive network of vaccination sites to serve those currently eligible for vaccination but vaccine supply is still very limited and will be for some time.

Can I get vaccine if I am undocumented?

Yes. New Jersey is rolling out COVID-19 vaccines step-by-step to all persons 16 and older who live, work, or study in the state, regardless of immigration status. Documentation is not required to be vaccinated. Vaccine sites may request documentation, but you are not required to have it to receive the vaccine and you cannot be denied access to the vaccine for not having ID. Sites will NOT ask for proof of immigration status.

For more information, visit the NJDOH Frequently Asked Questions available at https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Public_FAQ.pdf.