



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.

Are churches or other houses of worship offering religious services? What are the social distancing requirements?

Yes, houses of worship can open for in-person services.

There is no numerical limit for indoor and outdoor gatherings including religious services and events.

In New Jersey, face masks are no longer required in most outdoor and indoor settings. **Face masks are strongly recommended for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in indoor settings where there is increased risk**, including:

- Crowded indoor settings
- Indoor settings involving activities with close contact with others who may not be fully vaccinated
- Indoor settings where the vaccine status of other individuals in the setting is unknown
- Where an individual is immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease

NOTE: Social distancing, masking, and other safety measures are still required in high-risk areas such as [schools](#), [healthcare settings](#), [public transportation](#), [child care centers](#), [correctional facilities](#), and homeless shelters.

Source: NJ COVID-19 Information Hub: covid19.nj.gov

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.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe even though they were developed rapidly?

The vaccines were able to be developed rapidly because of the following:

- Vaccines have already been created for coronaviruses similar to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), so a lot of the work was already done.
- All vaccines have gone through the same steps to show safety and effectiveness.
- Many steps occurred at the same time (e.g., vaccines were being made while testing was taking place). No steps were skipped.
- Collaboration between medical experts and researchers, along with plentiful funding helped to bring vaccines to the public sooner

COVID-19 vaccines are **safe and effective**. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

For more information and to view a video about vaccine safety, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>

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>.

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.

How can I schedule an appointment to get vaccinated?

There are multiple ways to get an appointment including:

1. Use the [NJ Vaccine Appointment Finder](#) to find vaccination locations near you with available appointments.
2. Attend a [pop-up or mobile vaccination event](#) in your community
3. Register with the [NJ Vaccine Scheduling System](#) to be notified when an appointment is available to you at vaccine locations that use the State's Vaccine Scheduling System. **If you need assistance registering with the NJVSS, please call 855-568-0545.**
4. Seniors 65+ can call the senior-specific hotline at 856-249-7007 from 8am to 8pm to schedule dedicated vaccine appointments
5. Veterans, their spouses, and their caregivers may be eligible for vaccines through the VA. [Learn more here.](#)

Note: Please verify requirements with a vaccination site before visiting or making an appointment. Some require proof of residency within a specific county or municipality. In addition, those under 18 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to be vaccinated, and can only receive the Pfizer vaccine at this time .

How can you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you are homebound?

If you are unable to leave the home to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or are the healthcare provider or family caregiver of someone who is homebound, you may request an in-home vaccination appointment by completing a form at covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax (English) or covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax-es (Spanish). For assistance completing the form by phone, please call the NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center at 1-855-568-0545.

Where can I find information on public transportation to vaccine locations?

Through the Department's VAXRIDE initiative, NJ TRANSIT supports New Jerseyans in their efforts to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Visit <https://www.njtransit.com/vaxride> to find vaccination sites that are conveniently served by NJ TRANSIT bus, train and light rail routes. In addition, NJ 211 is offering free rides to and from vaccination sites in partnership with United Way Worldwide and Lyft. Rides are available wherever Lyft operates in New Jersey and is available to everyone including those with collapsible wheelchairs and walkers. To request a free ride, call 211 or text 898-211, or visit 211 to learn more.

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