



Ascension

Information about COVID-19 vaccines

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How many COVID-19 vaccines are under development?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), multiple COVID-19 vaccines are under development. The two vaccines expected to be first available are the Pfizer BioNTech BNT162b2 and the Moderna mRNA-1273.

What is the Catholic Church's position on these vaccines?

In a statement about the vaccines, the [Catholic Health Association of the United States](#) (CHA) said, in part, "using the guidelines released by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005 and 2017 on the origin of vaccines, CHA ethicists, in collaboration with other Catholic bioethicists, find nothing morally prohibitive with the vaccines developed by Pfizer and BioNTech and Moderna."

Neither the Pfizer nor Moderna vaccine contain nor are derived from aborted fetal cell lines. This has been confirmed by multiple scientific groups and Catholic organizations, including the CHA, the National Catholic Bioethics Center, and the Charlotte Lozier Institute of Science & Statistics for Life.

When will a COVID-19 vaccine be available for adults? When will a COVID-19 vaccine be available for children?

According to the CDC, the goal of "Operation Warp Speed" is to deliver safe vaccines that work, with the first supply becoming available before the end of 2020. When a vaccine is authorized or approved in the United States, there may not be enough doses available for all adults. Supplies will increase over time, and all adults seeking to be vaccinated should be able to receive a vaccine later in 2021.

According to the CDC, at this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is not approved for young children and may not be available for young children until additional studies are completed.

When is Ascension planning to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine? Which vaccine is Ascension planning to use initially?

Ascension will begin its vaccination program as soon as an emergency use authorization (EUA) is granted by the FDA for those vaccines and we have doses available. Consistent with national guidance, front-line healthcare workers will be prioritized first within our vaccination program.

How will vaccine availability be determined?

Ascension is following the recommendations of the CDC, the CHA, and the Department of Health and Human Services, and state governments, which have identified higher-risk populations to be vaccinated first. Many healthcare workers and first responders will receive the earliest wave of vaccines that are available, as these professions are exposed to COVID-19 at higher rates than others. Older residents of nursing homes and those with high-risk health conditions would receive the next round of vaccinations. You can find more information at www.cdc.gov.

What are the risks of the vaccine?

The FDA's rigorous approval process helps ensure that vaccines are safe and highly effective. However, all medications, including vaccines, carry a small risk of side effects. Most common side effects are identified in clinical trials before the vaccine is approved, but less-common side effects may not be detected until the medicines or vaccines are more widely available. That's why vaccines are continuously, carefully monitored for possible side effects even after they are approved by the FDA.

What are the risks of not vaccinating?

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory virus that has infected more than 64 million people worldwide and caused more than 1.5 million deaths, [according to the World Health Organization](#). In the United States, as of early December, COVID-19 has infected more than 14 million people and caused more than 275,000 deaths, [according to the CDC](#). Measures to slow the spread include wearing a mask, social distancing, diligent handwashing and COVID-19 vaccination.

How do we know the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective?

Vaccination, although associated with very high efficacy, is still not 100%. We are unable to know each individual person's response to the vaccine, but the studies have indicated the protection has been as high as 95%. This means that according to the studies, if 100 people take the vaccine, 95 people will benefit from taking it and will be protected from infection. This is an excellent response compared to other vaccines. The benefit of vaccination is providing protection to those who receive it, and to create a majority of the population that is immune so we can prevent transmission of infection between people.

How many doses of the vaccine will someone need?

According to the CDC, all but one of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in Phase 3 clinical trials in the United States need two shots to be effective. The other COVID-19 vaccine uses one shot. For vaccines that require two doses, both doses must be from the same manufacturer.

The Pfizer BioNTech BNT162b2 vaccine requires two doses 21 days apart. The Moderna mRNA-1273 vaccine requires two doses 28 days apart.

How can I learn more?

Ascension has established a COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Center website that provides resources and updates. The site can be found by clicking [here](#).