

## COVID-19 Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Rev 03-05-2021

### Vaccine Overview

*Three COVID-19 vaccines have Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for use in patients 16 years of age and older; the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for use in persons 18 years of age and older.*

#### **Q: Which vaccines will be available?**

**A:** Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines have FDA emergency use authorization. Once additional vaccines receive FDA clearance for emergency use authorization, we expect to offer those vaccines as they become available.

#### **Q: Will I need an appointment to receive the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes, vaccination is by appointment only. You can make an appointment at any clinic offered across the Hartford HealthCare system.

#### **Q: What if I make an appointment, but then change my mind or am too busy to attend my scheduled vaccine clinic time?**

**A:** Please do not schedule an appointment if you are still unsure about receiving the vaccine; you would be taking an appointment that could be used by another person who wants the vaccine.

### Vaccine Safety

Read full FDA Briefing Document on the **Pfizer-BioNTech** COVID-19 Vaccine [here](#), on the **Moderna** COVID-19 Vaccine [here](#), on the **Janssen** COVID-19 Vaccine [here](#)

#### **Q: Are the vaccines safe and effective?**

**A:** Data we have indicates that the vaccines are safe. Thus far, no serious long-term side effects have occurred, and any side effects that do occur are not severe and occur within six weeks of vaccination. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will continue to monitor for safety issues.

#### **Q: How does the vaccine work?**

**A:** The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are different from more traditional vaccines, which often use a weakened or dead version of a virus, or a laboratory-generated protein, to trigger an immune response. The COVID-19 vaccines instead use a snippet of the virus's genetic code to teach the immune system to recognize and fight the coronavirus. This is called a messenger-RNA (mRNA)-based vaccine. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is manufactured using a specific type of virus called adenovirus type 26 (Ad26) which triggers the body to temporarily make the spike protein, which does not cause disease, but triggers the immune system to learn to react defensively, producing an immune response against SARS-CoV-2.

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### **Q: Can I get COVID-19 or will I be contagious after receiving the vaccine?**

**A:** No. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain live or dead virus, so it cannot infect you with COVID-19, therefore will not make you contagious. You should, however, continue to wear a mask indoors at all times except at home and practice physical distancing even after you have received both doses of the vaccine.

### **Q: Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant?**

**A:** At this time, there is insufficient data to recommend whether or not pregnant women should get the vaccine, however, evidence suggests that pregnant women are potentially at increased risk for severe COVID-19-associated illness and death compared to non-pregnant women, underscoring the importance of disease prevention in this population. The COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to pregnant, lactating and non-lactating women. The decision to be vaccinated should involve a discussion between the woman and her care provider.

### **Q: Should I get the vaccine if I am immunocompromised?**

**A:** At present, there is not enough data to make conclusions about the efficacy and safety of the vaccine in immunocompromised patients. However, an immunocompromised state does not mean one cannot get the vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine should be offered. The decision to be vaccinated should involve a discussion between you and your care provider.

### **Q: Should I get the vaccine if I have had another vaccine within 14 days?**

**A:** Given the lack of data on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines administered simultaneously with other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines should be administered alone, with a minimum interval of 14 days before or after administration with any other vaccine

### **Q: I have surgery scheduled and also have the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Should I get the vaccine if I am scheduled for surgery?**

**A:** Because surgery can alter your normal immune function, consider adjusting your scheduled surgery for either two weeks before the first dose or two weeks after the second dose of the vaccine.

### **Q: Will the newly reported strain of COVID-19 affect the immune response triggered by the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** At this time, there is not enough information to say for certain if this new strain can challenge the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, however, there is no evidence to suggest the new strain would make current vaccines less effective.

### **Q: What are the possible side effects of the vaccine?**

**A:** As with any injection, with the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines you may experience injection site reactions including pain, swelling, redness at the injection site and/or swelling of the lymph nodes in the arm of the injection. Based on interim data, side effects may include fatigue, muscle pain, headaches, joint

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pain, chills, nausea and vomiting and/or fever in some patients. More severe side effects were reported in fewer than 2% of the study participants, but may be increased with the second dose. It is important for vaccination providers and recipients to expect that there may be some side effects after either dose, but even more so after the second dose. Learn more with information from the FDA:

[Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(Pfizer\)](#)

[Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(Moderna\)](#)

[Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(Johnson & Johnson\)](#)

### **Q: Do I need to receive more than one vaccination?**

**A: For the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine,** two doses of vaccine are currently required, separated by 21 or 28 days, respectively. Because different COVID-19 vaccine products will not be interchangeable, your second dose must be from the same manufacturer as your first dose. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has assured us that there will be sufficient vaccine for second doses, once you receive the first. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is currently approved as a single injection.

### **Q: How will I know which manufacturer my vaccine came from?**

**A:** The manufacturer of the vaccine you are administered will be recorded in the system used for documentation. You may also receive a card with the manufacturer and other information.

### **Q: Do I need to receive my second dose exactly 21 or 28 days from the first dose?**

**A:** No. The number of days between the two doses is the recommended minimal interval between the two. Your second dose will be scheduled as close as possible to the second date once the full minimal interval has passed.

### **Q: What if I miss my second dose?**

**A:** We strongly recommend receiving the second dose, otherwise the vaccination series will be incomplete and the vaccine likely will not achieve maximum efficacy.

### **Q: Can I get the vaccine if I am feeling ill? Do I need to feel 100% well to receive the vaccine?**

**A:** As with all vaccines, it is recommended that you do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine if you are feeling ill.

### **Q: What should I do if I am offered the opportunity to receive the vaccine while I am in quarantine?**

**A:** To protect others, you must wait to get vaccinated until you have completed your quarantine.

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### **Q: What happens if I get COVID-19 between vaccine doses?**

**A:** You would still need to self-isolate per current guidelines. To stay safe between vaccines, and even after you receive the full dose, you are urged to continue practicing physical distancing, wear a mask indoors at all times except at home, and wash your hands frequently until further notice.

### **Q: Do I need the vaccine if I have already had COVID-19 and recovered?**

**A:** Yes, you should still receive the vaccine. Experts continue to study antibodies that develop in response to COVID-19. If these antibodies are protective, it's not known what antibody levels are needed to protect against reinfection. Therefore, even those who previously had COVID-19 can and should receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Q: How long after having COVID-19 can I receive one of the vaccines?**

**A:** Vaccination of persons with known current SARS-CoV-2 infection should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness and criteria have been met from them to discontinue isolation.

### **Q: How long after getting receiving monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma treatment for COVID-19 can I get the vaccine?**

**A:** You should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Q: Do I need the vaccine if I have tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies?**

**A:** Yes. Even if you have tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies, it is recommended that you receive the vaccine.

### **Q: Do I need to continue to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing after I have received the two doses of the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes! While the vaccine is extremely effective, a small percentage of those who receive it may not be fully protected, so we need to continue to wear masks and other PPE, maintain physical distance and use other precautions. Also, because not everyone will be vaccinated at once, it will take a while before COVID-19 is no longer circulating widely.