

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Need Help: During this time of heightened health concern, Beach Cities Health District is available to offer help and support. If you or someone you know in the Beach Cities needs assistance with errands, health-related information or referrals, please call our Assistance, Information & Referral line at **310-374-3426, ext. 256**.

The COVID-19 vaccine development is continually evolving. For up-to-date information, visit bchd.org/covidvaccine. To receive our e-newsletters, sign up on bchd.org/coronavirus.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued emergency use authorization (EUA) for two vaccines for the prevention of COVID-19.

	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna
Age requirement	For individuals 16 years of age and older	For individuals 18 years of age and older
Effectiveness	95%	94.1%
Vaccine administration	Two doses, three weeks apart	Two doses, four weeks apart
Side effects	<p>The most commonly reported side effects, which typically lasted several days, were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever. Source: FDA</p> <p>More people experienced these side effects after the second dose than after the first dose; you can expect that there may be some side effects after either dose, but even more so after the second dose. Experiencing side effects is a normal sign that your body is building protection. Source: CDC</p>	

DISTRIBUTION

When can I get vaccinated?

In Los Angeles County, COVID-19 vaccines are **currently being distributed to Phase 1A and adults 65+**. To find out which distribution tier you belong in, visit bchd.org/covidvaccine.

What can I do now to help protect myself from getting COVID-19 since I am not in one of the current prioritization groups?

Even with vaccines on the horizon, it remains essential that we continue to follow the health guidance and take steps to reduce the risk of getting COVID-19 or giving it to others. It truly is safest at home. If you leave your home, wear your face covering correctly and physically distance yourself from others. Wash your hands often. Individuals with underlying health conditions and those that are older should remain in their home and not be around others unless seeking routine or essential health and dental care. If you are having difficulty breathing, go to an emergency room or call 911.

SAFETY

Who should not get vaccinated?

If you have had a severe allergic reaction—also known as anaphylaxis—to any ingredient in the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the Moderna vaccine, you should not get vaccinated. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable therapies, ask your doctor if you should get one of the vaccines. Your doctor will help you decide if it is safe for you to get the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna vaccine. Source: CDC

Can the vaccine give you COVID-19?

No. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The current vaccines don't include the virus in any form – no live virus, no weakened virus, no dead virus. It is possible to catch the disease in the first few days after your vaccination before the vaccine has a chance to work, but that would not mean you got sick from the vaccine. For most people, the vaccine needs 7 days before it starts to work. And both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require a second dose before a person is fully protected from getting sick from the virus. Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

GETTING VACCINATED

How is the vaccine administered? When do I get my second dose?

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two doses. The Pfizer-BioNTech doses are given three weeks (21 days) apart and the Moderna four weeks (28 days) apart. You must receive the same vaccine for both doses. Your second dose should be administered as close to the recommended 21 days or 28 days interval as possible. However, if it is not feasible to adhere to the recommended interval, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be scheduled for administration up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose. Second doses administered within a grace period of 4 days earlier than the recommended date for the second dose are also considered valid. Source: CDC

I had COVID-19; do I still need to get vaccinated?

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, you may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have been sick with COVID-19 before. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. Source: CDC

Should I still follow the public health protocols after I get vaccinated? How long will immunity last after vaccination?

Yes. Although the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are very effective, no vaccine is 100% effective. We also won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have more data on how well the vaccines work. This is why it remains essential to continue to follow the public health protocols such as staying home as much as possible, wearing face coverings, physically distancing yourself from others you do not live with, washing your hands frequently and avoiding crowds. Vaccines are an additional tool in the fight against COVID-19. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic. Source: CDC