

# COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ for Patients



**Indiana**  
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## What is an EUA?

An Emergency Use Authorization is allowed in instances where a public health threat is identified and there is no approved or adequate existing products. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carefully reviews all safety data from clinical trials and authorizes emergency vaccine use only when the expected benefits outweigh potential risks. For more information about EUAs visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGkwaESsGBQ>.

[v=iGkwaESsGBQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGkwaESsGBQ).

Source: FDA. (2020). Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccine Explained. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained>

## What is Operation Warp Speed?

Operation Warp Speed's goal is to make a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine widely available as soon as possible. In traditional vaccine development timelines, manufacturing steps are carried out in a sequential basis, however, with Operation Warp Speed manufacturing steps are carried out simultaneously. This increases the financial risk, but does not compromise the safety of the vaccine.

Source: HHS. (2020). Fact Sheet: Explaining Operation Warp Speed. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html>

## Is Natural Immunity better than vaccine-induced immunity? I am I better off getting COVID-19 instead of getting the vaccine?

Natural immunity comes from fighting off a virus, however, COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect a person. There are potential serious long-term health issues after recovering from COVID-19. It is not known whether getting COVID-19 protects you from getting the virus again in the future, or how long natural immunity lasts. Additionally, when you become infected with the virus, you risk transmitting it to the people around you.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

## Can I stop wearing a mask/social distancing after I get the vaccine?

While the vaccine greatly reducing your risk of contracting COVID-19, it is not a perfect fix, you will still need to practice precautions like wearing a mask, social distancing, and other hygiene measures until public health experts say otherwise.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

## Could the vaccine cause long term side effects or other problems that we do not know about yet?

The FDA and CDC are continuing to monitor the safety of the vaccine, to identify any possible long-term side effects. The ACIP will take action to address any safety issues that are identified. When you receive the vaccine, you will be provided with resources to report any adverse reaction to the vaccine.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

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## Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

### What is mRNA?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. mRNA vaccines are not made up of the actual pathogen, they are made up of genetic information and not parts of the virus. The mRNA must be taken up into the body's cells, and the cells are then able to produce the protein that stimulates the immune response. mRNA vaccines train the body to identify and attack the coronavirus protein. Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not affect your DNA.

Source: HHS. (2020). Fact Sheet: Explaining Operation Warp Speed. Retrieved from <https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/10/21/how-pfizers-rna-vaccine-works-15104>

### Will the vaccine make you sick?

The vaccine cannot give someone COVID-19 because it does not contain the live virus. Side effects can occur with any vaccine, as they are a sign that the immune system is working to build up protection against a virus. Symptoms from the vaccine typically resolve within a week, but you should talk to your doctor about when to seek medical care if your symptoms do not go away.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

### Is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine safe?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) carefully review all safety data from clinical trials before authorizing emergency vaccines and recommend the vaccine for use only when the expected benefits outweigh potential risks. The FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the safety of these vaccines. There is a reporting system in place to identify any possible side effects or adverse events.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

### What is the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System? What is the V-safe Monitoring System?

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is a national monitoring system that tracks instances of vaccine adverse events. Healthcare personal and vaccine manufacturers are required to report adverse events that occur after vaccination in VAERS. V-safe is a new smartphone-based health monitoring system for people who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. V-safe uses text messaging and web surveys to provide daily health check-ins with COVID-19 vaccine recipients and will provide telephone follow up to anyone who reports medically important adverse events. A VAERS report will be taken during telephone follow up, if appropriate.

Source: CDC. (2020). Ensuring the Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>

## Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

### How is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Administered?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is administered intramuscularly in a series of two injections, with a waiting period of 21 days between the injections. After administration, the person receiving the vaccine will be monitored for 15 minutes by vaccination staff.

Source: CDC. (2020). Answering Patients' Questions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html>

### What are the ingredients in the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine includes the following ingredients: mRNA, lipids ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol), potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate, and sucrose.

Source: Pfizer. (2020). Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers. Retrieved from <https://selfservehosteu.pfizer.com/pfrrdownload/file/fid/77051>

### What are the potential risks and side effects of the Pfizer BioNTech-19 COVID-19 Vaccine?

Side effects that have been reported with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine include:

Injection site pain, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, injection site swelling, injection site redness, nausea, feeling unwell, swollen lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy).

There is a remote chance that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include:

Difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, a fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over your body, dizziness and weakness

These may not be all the possible side effects of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Serious and unexpected side effects may occur. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is still being studied in clinical trials.

Source: Pfizer. (2020). Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers. Retrieved from <https://selfservehosteu.pfizer.com/pfrrdownload/file/fid/77051>