COVID-19 VACCINE
#CommunityImmunityWV

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination for Teens

All West Virginians 12 years of age and older are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccination is the safest, most effective path toward building immunity to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. Below are answers to common questions.

Learn more at vaccinate.wv.gov or call WV COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line: 1-833-734-0965.

Are teens at risk for COVID-19?

Yes. The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person, mainly through droplets produced when an infected person exhales or speaks, and especially when they yell, sing, cough, or sneeze. Droplets can land on or be inhaled by people who are nearby. Although older adults and individuals with underlying health conditions are at increased risk for severe COVID-19, teens can also be severely infected by the virus. In fact, approximately 1.5 million COVID-19 cases in individuals 11 to 17 years of age have been reported to the CDC since March 2020. Many new cases of COVID-19 in West Virginia are primarily among individuals in their late teens and twenties.

Are teens eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in West Virginia?

Yes. Those 12 years of age and older are eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and those 18 years of age and older may receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Where can my teen get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- West Virginia schools are offering COVID-19 vaccines to their students who are 12 years of age and older and their families at school-located vaccination clinics or at school-based health clinics.
- You can schedule a vaccine appointment for your teen by visiting vaccines.gov/search/. For those who are 12 to 17 years of age: select the "Pfizer-BioNTech COVID Vaccine" in the Vaccines box at top, and entering your zip code. Follow prompts to schedule a vaccine appointment or call the location.
- West Virginians who do not have internet access or who need assistance with finding a COVID-19 vaccine location should call the West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line: 1-833-734-0965.

Visit vaccinate.wv.gov for more information about COVID-19 vaccination locations.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

- **Yes.** Tens of thousands of individuals took part in clinical trials that showed safety and effectiveness. Specifically, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was found safe and effective for those ages 12 and older in clinical trials, and it has been administered to millions of people ages 16 and older. Millions of people in the United States and around the world have received COVID-19 vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. More information about COVID-19 vaccine safety can be found at vaccinate.wv.gov or www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html.

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M-F 8am - 6pm, Sat 9am - 5pm, closed Sunday or visit vaccinate.wv.gov

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Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. are highly effective in preventing severe COVID-19 disease as well as COVID-19 related hospitalizations and death.

What are common side effects after receiving COVID-19 vaccination?

The most common side effects in adolescents were pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle pain, fever and joint pain, consistent with trials in older teens and adults. These responses are a sign that your body is building up protection against the virus, and these effects typically go away in a few days. For some people, these responses are sometimes more intense after a second vaccine dose, and they go away soon after vaccination.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines work by allowing the body's immune system to build antibodies to recognize and fight the virus. The vaccines teach our cells how to recognize the spike protein of the virus that causes COVID-19 and activate an immune response to fight it off. This means that the COVID-19 vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for people who want to become pregnant in the future?

There is no evidence the COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility. Top medical experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to a person trying to become pregnant in the short or long term. People who may want to become pregnant in the future can get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I get COVID-19 from a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. COVID-19 vaccines cannot make anyone sick with COVID-19. It usually takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after being fully vaccinated (2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna or 1 dose of Johnson & Johnson). That means it is possible for an individual to get COVID-19 if that person was exposed to the virus just before or just after vaccination. The vaccine itself does not cause infection.

If my teen already had COVID-19 and recovered, should they still get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Your teen may be at risk of contracting COVID-19 again without protection from the vaccines. Immunity from a previous infection from the virus that causes COVID-19 can wear off and may not be protective against variants. Therefore, medical experts recommend that those who have already had COVID-19 get vaccinated. (However, children or adults with a history of multisystem inflammatory syndrome linked to COVID-19 may be vaccinated but should consider waiting until 90 days after the diagnosis of this syndrome.)

Which teens age 12 or older should not get the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are not recommended for anyone who has a severe or immediate allergic reaction to anything in the vaccine or who have had an allergic reaction to the 1st dose of the vaccine. More specific information about allergies, vaccine ingredients, and other vaccination considerations is available in the Frequently Asked Questions at vaccinate.wv.gov.

What is the cost of the COVID-19 vaccine?

There is no fee for COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines themselves are free, and any fee for administering them will be covered by the patient's public or private insurance company, so there is no cost for the person getting vaccinated. People without health insurance can get vaccines at no cost.

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