



Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is a crucial safety measure for all frontline workers. DHS encourages all frontline workers to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available to them because it will protect them and help eradicate the spread of coronavirus.

The vaccine rollout is happening quickly, and we recognize that you may have questions. We have attempted to answer some of the most frequently asked questions below and update them as more information is available. For further questions, contact your HR department.

### **When will I get the vaccine?**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health's [Covid-19 Interim Vaccination Plan](#) outlines a phased approach to administering the vaccine across the Commonwealth. Following the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the Centers for Disease Control, the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) are prioritizing the allocation of vaccination doses.

### **Why should I get the vaccine?**

Coronavirus is a serious, potentially fatal disease. It has infected people worldwide and killed millions. The COVID-19 vaccination will build protection from COVID-19 and brings us one step closer to the end of this pandemic.

### **Allegheny Health Network**

Coronavirus is a serious, life-threatening disease. It has infected millions of people worldwide and continues to pose a threat to our livelihood. Vaccinating is the safest, most effective way to build protection against this disease. If everyone makes an effort to vaccinate, we will develop “herd immunity,” meaning roughly 70% of the population can fend off the disease. Ultimately, this will slow the spread. [Learn more.](#)

### **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center**

A vaccine is the best way to reach herd immunity against COVID. [Herd immunity](#) occurs when a large portion of a population is immune to the disease, which can slow or stop the disease’s spread.

Scientists estimate that 70% to 90% of the population will need to become immune to COVID-19 for herd immunity to be reached. For that to happen, getting the vaccine is crucial. [Learn more.](#)

[Read about the benefits of getting the COVID-19 vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](#)

### **Is the vaccine safe? Should I be concerned that it was approved so quickly?**

Vigorous testing has been conducted, the FDA has approved its use, and both manufacturers of the vaccines available in the US — Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna—report no significant side effects.

### **Allegheny Health Network**

The vaccine has gone through rigorous testing, received FDA approval and been approved by several other countries worldwide.

As with the chickenpox or measles vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine will help to eradicate coronavirus from our population and keep everyone as safe as possible.

Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) was given to make the vaccine available as quickly as possible. EUA does not mean that safety was compromised or that the vaccine somehow skipped deep analysis and testing. It simply means that this vaccine was prioritized above all others and that multiple steps occurred simultaneously. It was a collaborative, all-in effort by the FDA to address this public health crisis and keep our communities safe. [Learn more.](#)

### **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center**

All reported data on the COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna suggest their vaccines are safe.

For the FDA to approve a vaccine for use, the manufacturer must prove it is safe in humans. The potential benefit must outweigh the risk.

All vaccine candidates were rigorously monitored for safety during the trial and approval process. Both Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna have reported no significant side effects with their vaccines. These and others will continue to be monitored for long-term side effects and other safety concerns. [Learn more.](#)

[Read about clinical trials and vaccine safety monitoring from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention.](#)

### **Does the vaccine work?**

The FDA requires that vaccines must be at least 50% effective to be authorized. Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are over 90% effective.

### **Allegheny Health Network**

Both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are over 90% effective. This means they will prevent over 90% of people from developing symptomatic coronavirus. If you receive the vaccine and are in the small percentage of people who still contract coronavirus, it will minimize the severity of your symptoms.

To better understand that number, the FDA set a bar that the vaccine must be at least 50% effective to be considered for authorization. Both companies' vaccines are far surpassing that minimum requirement.

For further perspective, annual flu vaccines are 40-60% effective, whereas the two doses of the measles vaccine are 97% effective. [Learn more.](#)

### **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center**

The goal of the COVID-19 vaccine is to prevent the disease. No vaccine is 100% effective. However, both Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna have reported that their vaccines are more than 94% effective in preventing COVID-19.

Those figures far exceed FDA requirements for vaccine effectiveness.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read about vaccine effectiveness from the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention.](#)