

## COVID-19 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Who is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The vaccine will be administered to DoD uniformed service members, both active and Selected Reserve components, including members of the National Guard; dependents; retirees; civilian employees; and select DoD contract personnel as authorized in accordance with DoD regulation.

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

DOD prioritization schema is consistent with CDC guidance and first prioritizes those providing direct medical care, then moves to maintaining essential national security and installation functions, deploying forces, and then those beneficiaries at the highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19 before other members of the DOD population.

Continue to monitor [www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus](http://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus) to learn what phase in the DoD schema we are currently.

### **What do I do if I did not receive a call for an appointment or if I missed the call?**

If you believe you missed the phone call or were missed, please call CAMO at 210-916-9900 to schedule an appointment.

### **Are the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**

All the COVID-19 vaccines being used have gone through rigorous studies to ensure they are as safe as possible. Systems that allow CDC to watch for safety issues are in place across the entire country.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines that have been shown to meet rigorous safety criteria and be effective as determined by data from the manufacturers and findings from large clinical trials. Clinical trials for all vaccines must first show they meet rigorous criteria for safety and effectiveness before any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines, can be authorized or approved for use. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?**

No. COVID-19 mRNA vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

Messenger RNA vaccines—also called mRNA vaccines—are the first COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States. mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.

**Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

**Is it safe for me to receive a vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?**

People with underlying medical conditions can receive the FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines provided they have not had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. Vaccination is an important consideration for adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions because they are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Do I need to continue to wear a mask and social distance after being fully vaccinated?**

Yes. Not enough information is currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide in real-world conditions before making that decision. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

**If I have already had COVID, so I still need to get vaccinated?**

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection with COVID-19 is possible, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. Experts do not yet 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. We won’t know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have more data on how well the vaccines work.