COVID-19 Vaccines: What Older New Yorkers Need to Know

COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) are available to residents and staff in nursing homes and other group living facilities, health care workers and other frontline essential workers. The vaccines are also available to people age 65 and older.

Why is it important for older adults to get vaccinated against COVID-19?

While anyone can get sick from COVID-19, the risk of severe illness increases with age. Severe illness from COVID-19 may lead to hospitalization, intensive care, use of a ventilator or even death. Certain underlying medical conditions, such as cancer, chronic kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and heart disease, also increase the risk of severe COVID-19.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe and do they work?

Yes. Scientists built off decades of research for other vaccines when developing the COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines went through large clinical studies involving tens of thousands of people of different ages, races and ethnicities. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines.

In clinical studies, both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were found to be more than 94% effective at protecting people from COVID-19. The vaccines were shown to be safe and effective for people age 65 and older. The vaccines require two doses at least 21 days (Pfizer) or 28 days (Moderna) apart to be fully effective.

Are there side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines?

Most people report mild to moderate side effects, including soreness in the arm, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever. Side effects usually go away within two to three days, are more common after the second shot and are less common in older adults. Call your health care provider if you have side effects that concern you or do not go away after a few days, or if the redness or soreness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours.

Do I need the COVID-19 vaccine if I got the flu vaccine?

Yes. The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. Since older adults are at increased risk of complications from both the flu and COVID-19, they should get both vaccines. You should get your COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at least 14 days apart.

NYC VACCINE FOR ALL: SAFE, FREE, EASY

NYC Health

Is it safe for me to leave home to get vaccinated?

Vaccination sites are taking extra precautions to protect patients and staff, such as requiring appointments to reduce the number of people on-site. Everyone at the vaccination site must wear a face covering at all times.

How can I get to my vaccination appointment?

Free transportation to and from City-run vaccination sites is available for people 65 and older who need transportation. Information on how to arrange transportation will be provided when you make your appointment. If you take public transportation, find the most direct and least crowded way to travel. No matter how you travel, keep 6 feet from others, wear a face covering, use hand sanitizer often and avoid touching your face.

How much will it cost to get vaccinated?

You will be able to receive a vaccination at no cost. If you have insurance, it may be billed.

Where can I get vaccinated?

If you live in a nursing home or other group care facility, you should get your vaccine there. If you do not live in a group care facility, you can make a vaccination appointment by:

- Visiting **nyc.gov/vaccinefinder** to find a vaccination site near you
- Calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to make an appointment at a City-run site
- Contacting your provider or pharmacy to see if they are offering vaccination

Do I need to provide proof of eligibility to be vaccinated?

Yes. You must fill out the New York State (NYS) COVID-19 Vaccine Form at **vaccineform.health.ny.gov** before being vaccinated. You will also need to bring proof of age (such as a passport or birth certificate) and proof of New York residency (such as a utility bill, other mail, or a rent or mortgage statement). A NYS driver's license or IDNYC can be used for both. Check with your vaccination site for specific requirements.

Can my home care worker or aide also receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Home care workers and aides, hospice workers, and personal care aides have also been prioritized to get vaccinated. They will need to make an appointment and bring proof they are employed in New York.

Can I stop physical distancing and wearing a face covering after I get vaccinated?

No. Until we understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide, everyone must continue key prevention measures: stay home if sick, stay 6 feet away from others, wear a face covering and keep your hands clean.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, talk to your provider, call **311** or visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccine**.

For a list of free services and support for older New Yorkers during the COVID-19 public health emergency, visit **nyc.gov/aging/covid19**.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. **1.20.21**