# COVID-19 VACCINE

## ABOUT THE VACCINE

**How do COVID-19 vaccines work?**

COVID-19 vaccination works by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight the COVID-19 virus. This protects you from getting infected. The current vaccines are given in two doses 3-4 weeks apart, depending on the vaccine you receive. The first shot primes the immune system, helping it recognize the virus; and the second shot strengthens the immune response. **Please note: these vaccines do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 and the vaccine will not make you sick with COVID-19.**

**How did they make the vaccine so quickly?**

Even though COVID-19 is new, these types of viruses (called coronaviruses) have been studied since the 1960s. This knowledge helped scientists understand the virus to make a vaccine as quickly and safely as possible. The FDA’s Emergency Use Authorization has allowed these vaccines to be used in order to help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

## GETTING VACCINATED

**When can I get vaccinated?**

The federal and state government is overseeing the distribution of vaccines. Due to limited quantities of vaccine, the State of California developed a distribution plan based on groups that are at high risk of getting COVID-19. All healthcare organizations must follow this plan (on the right). All Californians will eventually have access to the vaccine.

**How will I know if I am eligible to receive the vaccine?**

Most people will get vaccinated through their healthcare provider. NEMS will follow California’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan and as we move through the groups, NEMS will communicate the availability of vaccines to our patients on our website (www.nems.org/covid19) and post vaccine updates on social media. **If you have additional questions, please call NEMS at (415) 391-9686 or (650) 550-3923 or (408) 573-9686.**

### California’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE 1A</th>
<th>PHASE 1B</th>
<th>PHASE 1C</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Healthcare Workers</td>
<td>- Individuals 65 and older</td>
<td>- Individuals 50 -64 years of age</td>
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<td>- Long-Term Care Residents</td>
<td>- Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors:</td>
<td>- People 16-49 years of age who have an underlying health condition or disability which increases their risk of severe COVID-19</td>
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<td>- Education and childcare</td>
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<td>- Food and agriculture</td>
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<td>1B Tier One:</td>
<td>- Transportation and logistics</td>
<td>- Chemical and hazardous materials</td>
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<td>- Critical manufacturing</td>
<td>- Communications and IT</td>
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<td>Congregate settings with outbreak risk:</td>
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<td>- Financial services</td>
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*Chinese: 注意：如果您使用中文，您可以免费获得语言援助服务。请致电(415) 391-9686 转8160 (TTY: 1-800-735-2923)。

*Vietnamese: CHUYÊN: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số (415) 391-9686 ext. 8160 (TTY: 1-800-735-2923).*
How much does the vaccine cost?
The vaccine will be available to all recipients for free. Any vaccine administration fees will be billed to your insurance provider. For uninsured patients, NEMS will work with federally funded COVID-19 assistance programs to cover any administration fees; you will not pay anything out of pocket for the COVID-19 vaccination. For questions about covering this fee and for patients who are uninsured please reach out to NEMS Member Services Department at (415) 391-9686 ext. 8160 or (650) 550-3923 ext. 8160 or (408) 573-9686 ext. 8160.

Should I get vaccinated?
COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to help keep recipients from getting COVID-19. Clinical trials have shown that the current vaccines are safe and work well for adults of all ages, races, genders, and ethnic backgrounds. COVID-19 vaccine efficacy in preventing symptomatic disease is 94-95%. As with any vaccine there are still certain groups, such as those who are pregnant, breastfeeding, and have a history of severe allergic reactions, that should consult their doctor before receiving the vaccine. If you have questions, please reach out to your NEMS provider.

If I am pregnant or breastfeeding should I get the COVID Vaccine?
Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding may choose to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently there is limited data available on the use of the current COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant or breastfeeding individuals. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding please reach out to your NEMS provider. Your provider can guide you through the decision-making process while helping you determine your overall risk of contracting COVID-19 and potential vaccine side effects.

AFTER RECEIVING THE VACCINE

When will I get my second dose?
After receiving the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine NEMS will help you schedule your appointment for the second dose. You will receive your second dose 3-4 weeks after receiving your first dose, depending on the type of COVID-19 vaccine you receive. You can also download the CDC approved smartphone-based tool, V-Safe, which provides personalized health check-ins and a reminder for your second dose. To download, hold your phone’s camera to this QR code or visit www.cdc.gov/vsafe.

What side effects should I expect after receiving the vaccine?
Common side effects include pain and swelling on the arm where you got the shot, fatigue, headache, chills and/or fever. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a day or two. To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot, apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area and/or use or exercise your arm. To reduce discomfort from fever drink plenty of fluids and dress lightly. You can also take over-the-counter medicine, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen, after receiving the vaccine to treat fever, chills, headache, or muscle aches. Call the doctor if the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours or your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days.

Can I stop wearing a mask and social distancing once I get vaccinated?
No. It is important for you to continue covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing your hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others, even after you receive the vaccine. Continuing these practices, along with receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, will offer the best protection from COVID-19. Please note that it takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until 1-2 weeks after your second shot.

If I have allergies should I get the COVID-19 Vaccine?
CDC recommends that people with a history of severe allergic reactions that are not related to vaccines or injectable medications should get vaccinated. Prior to getting the vaccine, NEMS clinical staff will ask you a series of screening questions to determine if any allergies make it unsafe for you to receive the vaccine. Severe allergic reactions from the vaccine are rare; and those that do occur, primarily occur shortly after receiving the vaccine. NEMS requires all vaccine recipients to be observed for 15 minutes (or 30 minutes if you have a history of allergic reactions) after getting the vaccine to monitor for any allergic reactions. You can also consult with your doctor to see if the vaccine is right for you.

If I have a weakened immune system or take immunosuppressive drugs should I get the COVID Vaccine?
Individuals with a weakened immune system or individuals taking immunosuppressive drugs may choose to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently there is limited data available on the use of the current COVID-19 vaccines in immunocompromised populations. If you are an immunocompromised individual, you should reach out to your NEMS provider for counseling on the vaccine’s safety and effectiveness in immunocompromised populations, as well as the potential for reduced immune responses and the need to continue to follow all current guidance to protect themselves against COVID-19, including wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing hands frequently.