When is the best time to get vaccinated?

Can I get vaccinated while I am sick?

- You should wait until you are no longer sick before you get vaccinated. Getting vaccinated while sick can result in you infecting a healthcare provider and potentially having side effects from the vaccine. Additionally, when you are sick your immune system is already working to fight the illness you already have. Being vaccinated while sick can result in your current illness worsening.

I've already been sick with COVID-19; should I still get vaccinated?

- **Yes!** Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 provides added protection against severe illness. Think of it as similar to working your muscles out. You don't lift weights only one time, and expect to be strong forever. In a similar manner, your immune system can be safely stimulated to make more antibodies against COVID-19 by getting vaccinated, even after you've already had COVID-19.
- **Timing is Important:** If you recently had COVID-19, you may consider delaying your next vaccine dose (primary dose or booster) ***by 3 months from when your symptoms started*** or, if you had no symptoms, when you first received a positive test. This is because people retain high antibody levels against COVID-19 for about 3 months after illness. After that, their antibody levels drop off. A COVID-19 vaccine or booster after 3 months will bring your antibody levels back up.
- **People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised** have different recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines. These can be found on the CDC website.

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When Are You Up to Date With COVID-19 Vaccines?

You are **up to date** with your COVID-19 vaccines if you have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended for you by CDC.

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are based on three things:

1. Your age,
2. The vaccine you first received (e.g. Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J), and
3. The length of time since your last dose,

NOTE: You are still up to date if you receive all COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended for you and then become ill with COVID-19. You do not need to be immediately revaccinated or receive an additional booster.

Can I still get COVID-19, even if I am up-to-date on vaccines?

Unfortunately, yes. **However, vaccinated individuals are far less likely to experience severe illness, to suffer from Long COVID, <u>and are at far lower risk of death.</u> You are also far less likely to spread COVID-19 to your friends and family if you have been vaccinated.**

- "If you have an unvaccinated friend, family or coworker that you spend a significant time with, that person is 20 times more likely to give you COVID, even if you are vaccinated." ~ Natascha Tuznik, DO, Infectious Disease Specialist

Why is this?
The primary COVID-19 vaccine series were designed to provide immunity against the original strain of COVID. The bivalent boosters are designed to provide immunity against the original strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, as well as Omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5. Since COVID-19 continues to rapidly evolve new strains, it is possible to catch a new strain of COVID-19 and get sick with COVID-19, even if you are vaccinated. However, due to similarities between strains, you will already have some immunity, and would experience less severe illness, than you would have, had you been unvaccinated.

References: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html

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