



Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

COVID Vaccine Information for Families & Friends - Please Read!

Dear Family & Friends –

Thank you for listening to my voicemail from earlier today. Below is supporting information about the COVID-19 vaccines, including some fliers with helpful facts.

As you know, the CDC reports that COVID-19 vaccines are successful in reducing not only transmission of the virus but the severity of infection for those who contract it. This success has led the CDC to lift mask mandates for members of the general public who are *fully vaccinated* and not immunocompromised. This is a milestone many people have been waiting for.

We do, however, encourage you to consider the needs of those we love, and continue to mask-up. By choosing to wear face masks — we are securing our members' ongoing health and wellness.

At this time, all Veterans Home staff must continue to wear face masks while on-site. Additionally, members must continue to wear masks, except while eating, during certain activities, if they're in their room alone, and during guest in-room visits if all parties are fully vaccinated. Guests must wear masks in the building – except while in the member's room and all parties are fully vaccinated.

Another way you can help? Get vaccinated if you haven't already done so. The decision to be vaccinated doesn't come lightly for some— which is understandable. However, I've learned those who are hesitant about the vaccines feel that way because their confidence in them has been shaken by myths and misunderstandings. Ultimately, studies confirm the vaccines' benefits outweigh any risk of complications.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe & effective.

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are 94–95% effective two weeks after the second dose. (Flu shots are only 50% effective!)

The use of mRNA technology in the vaccines means that the actual virus itself is NOT used in the vaccine. Instead, messenger RNAs deliver information to the immune system that elicits a response to target and eliminate specific virus characteristics. In the case of coronaviruses, our bodies respond to their unique spike proteins that cover the exterior of the virus. Thus far this feature has ensured those vaccinated are protected against even the newest mutations of the virus.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is available for use again. It's a single-dose injection that's 66% effective. Unlike the Pfizer and Moderna shots, the J&J vaccine uses a cold virus, called an adenovirus, to carry the spike gene into the body.

No matter which injection they receive, vaccinated people are 20x less likely to become infected with COVID-19 and, thus, less likely to experience potential hospitalizations related to the virus.

The longer people stay unvaccinated, the more chances a virus has to mutate in ways our current vaccines can't fight effectively. The latest, most dominant variants of this virus are heavily impacting young people, causing chronic fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath, and brain fog even months after their infection.

The vaccines have undergone extensive review.

Every vaccine-related clinical trial is required to follow strict regulations and federal standards in order to protect the safety and well-being of all participants. The emergency use authorization was granted by the FDA for these vaccines after they were reviewed with the same level of scrutiny as they would be to get full approval.

Full FDA approval will be granted once enough time has passed to show *how long* the vaccines provide our bodies with protection from COVID-19.

Getting vaccinated comes with some very mild side-effects.

Just as with other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines can cause temporary side-effects soon after they're injected. As they begin teaching the immune system to fight the coronavirus, mild symptoms confirm the vaccine is working properly.

Data from all clinical trials found that less than 5% of people experienced anything other than mild side-effects such as injection site discomfort, fatigue, fever, and headache that subside within 24-48 hours. Most individuals report feeling more side-effects following a second dose.

Fully vaccinated people are protected against severe, life-threatening COVID-19 symptoms.

While you still can contract COVID-19 after vaccination, your risk of experiencing severe symptoms will be much lower. Similar to when contracting the flu after receiving a flu vaccine, those who tested positive for COVID-19 after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine experienced only mild symptoms.

Not only did vaccination seemingly lessen the impact of the virus, but it ensured these individuals did not require hospitalization.

Safe for Pregnancy & Family Planning

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine agree that the new mRNA COVID-19 vaccines should be offered to pregnant and breastfeeding individuals who are eligible for vaccination.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines don't contain virus particles which is important because pregnant women are at a very high-risk of serious complications related to the virus, including miscarriage or premature delivery, if they contract COVID-19. Because the vaccines use mRNA technology, the vaccines don't enter the nucleus of our cells so they can't alter DNA in recipients— including their fetuses. In addition, our bodies eliminate mRNA particles within hours or days so it's unlikely they'll reach or cross the placenta.

If you're pregnant or planning to be, we encourage you to discuss any concerns with either our medical director or your primary physician.

Senior living and care professionals are looked to for vaccine advocacy.

Starting in May, the CMS and CDC will require care communities to report COVID-19 vaccination status data for residents and team members each week. This data will be publicly available on CMS's website as part of their Quality metrics. It's expected this requirement will extend to other congregate living communities in the coming weeks.

This change in reporting has been made because top health officials confirm that becoming vaccinated is the most important thing we can do to end this pandemic.

If you or a loved one is interested in getting vaccinated, we'd love to help.

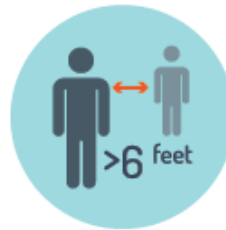
You can find out which pharmacies are serving your area by [[%20cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/retail-pharmacy-program/participating-pharmacies.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/retail-pharmacy-program/participating-pharmacies.html)]clicking here, stop by to see Katie Plendl or Katie Schemenauer, call us anytime: 715-720-6775 or email Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to everyone who lives and works at the Veterans Home.

For additional information about COVID-19 and FDA-approved vaccines, [visit the CDC website.](#)



COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccines (shots) are one of the tools we have to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.



To stop this pandemic, we need to use all of our prevention tools. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to protect your health and prevent disease. Vaccines work with your body's natural defenses so **your body will be ready to fight the virus**, if you are exposed (also called immunity). Other steps, like wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth and staying at least 6 feet away from other people you don't live with, also help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Studies show that COVID-19 **vaccines are very effective** at keeping you from getting COVID-19. Experts also think that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. These vaccines cannot give you the disease itself.



The vaccines are safe. The U.S. vaccine safety system makes sure that all vaccines are as safe as possible. All the COVID-19 vaccines that are being used have gone through the same safety tests and meet the same standards as any other vaccines produced through the years. A system in place across the entire country that allows CDC to watch for safety issues and make sure the vaccines stay safe.



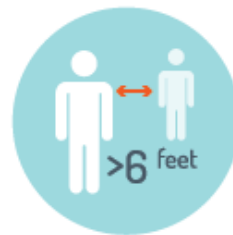
Different types of COVID-19 vaccines will be available. Most of these vaccines are given in two shots, one at a time and spaced apart. The first shot gets your body ready. The second shot is given at least three weeks later to make sure you have full protection. If you are told you need two shots, make sure that you get both of them. The vaccines may work in slightly different ways, but all types of the vaccines will help protect you.



The vaccines may cause side effects in some people, like sore muscles, feeling tired, or mild fever. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a day or two. **Having these types of side effects does NOT mean that you have COVID-19.** If you have questions about your health after your shot, call your doctor, nurse, or clinic. As with any medicine, it is rare but possible to have a serious reaction, such as not being able to breathe. It is very unlikely that this will happen, but if it does, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

When you get the vaccine, you *and* your healthcare worker will both need to wear masks.

CDC recommends that during the pandemic, people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside their household, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.



Even after you get your vaccine, you will need to keep wearing a mask that covers your nose **and** mouth, washing your hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from other people you do not live with. This gives you and others the best protection from catching the virus. Right now, experts don't know how long the vaccine will protect you, so it's a good idea to continue following the guidelines from CDC and your health department. **We also know not everyone will be able to get vaccinated right away, so it's still important to protect yourself and others.**

How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work

Understanding the virus that causes COVID-19.

Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called **spike proteins**. These **spike proteins** are ideal targets for vaccines.

What is mRNA?

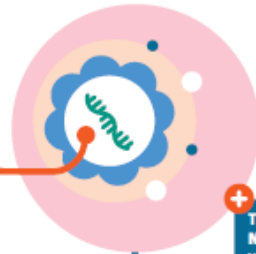
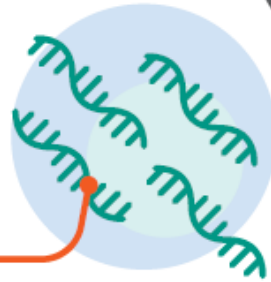
Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is genetic material that tells your body how to make proteins.

What is in the vaccine?

The vaccine is made of mRNA wrapped in a coating that makes delivery easy and keeps the body from damaging it.

How does the vaccine work?

The mRNA in the vaccine teaches your cells how to make copies of the **spike protein**. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off.



The vaccine DOES NOT contain ANY virus, so it cannot give you COVID-19. It cannot change your DNA in any way.

When your body responds to the vaccine, it can sometimes cause a mild fever, headache, or chills. This is completely normal and a sign that the vaccine is working.

After the mRNA delivers the instructions, your cells break it down and get rid of it.

Antibody

GETTING VACCINATED?

For information about COVID-19 vaccine, visit: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)



How Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines Work

Understanding the virus that causes COVID-19.

Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called **spike proteins**. These **spike proteins** are ideal targets for vaccines.

What is a viral vector vaccine?

A viral vector vaccine uses a harmless version of a different virus, called a "vector," to deliver information to the body that helps it protect you.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine teaches your body how to make copies of the **spike proteins**. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off.

The vaccine **DOES NOT** contain the virus that causes COVID-19 and cannot give you COVID-19. It also cannot make you sick from the virus that is used as the vector. It cannot change your DNA in any way.

When your body responds to the vaccine, it can sometimes cause tiredness, headache, muscle pain, nausea, or mild fever. These are normal signs the vaccine is working.

Antibody

GETTING VACCINATED?

For information about COVID-19 vaccine, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)



What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects.

Common side effects

On the arm where you got the shot:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

Helpful tips

If you have pain or discomfort after getting your vaccine, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot: To reduce discomfort from fever:

- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area.
- Use or exercise your arm.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress lightly.

When to call the doctor

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

Remember

- Side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.
- With some COVID-19 vaccines, you will need 2 shots in order to get the most protection. You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it.
- You will only need 1 shot of the viral vector COVID-19 vaccine, Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine.
- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until about two weeks after your second shot. For COVID-19 vaccines that require 1 shot, it takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to build protection.
- After you are fully vaccinated, you may be able to start doing some things you had stopped doing because of the pandemic. Visit CDC's website for the latest recommendations. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines.



Ask your vaccination provider about getting started with v-safe

Use your smartphone to tell CDC about any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. You'll also get reminders if you need a second dose.

Learn more about v-safe.
www.cdc.gov/vsafe

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan M. Corcoran'.

Megan M. Corcoran, NHA | Administrator
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls