

USA Health will be providing the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination for your facility's frontline healthcare workers. This document is intended to help you determine if COVID-19 vaccination is right for you.

What is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech product is a vaccine authorized under emergency use that may prevent you from getting COVID-19. Because this is an emergency utilization of the vaccine, this product has not been granted full approval yet. This means the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined at this time the benefits of this vaccine outweigh the risks when administered to persons who are 16 years of age or older. You are encouraged to read the full EUA by clicking [here](#).

How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is given via an intramuscular injection (shot) into your deltoid (shoulder) muscle.

How does this vaccine work?

This vaccine works by sending messenger RNA (mRNA) into your muscle with instructions to your immune cells to stimulate an immune response (protection) against COVID-19. It teaches your body how to make a protein that triggers antibody production so if the real virus enters your body at a later date, your immune cells will recognize it and protect you against it.

Will this vaccine affect my DNA?

No, it does not enter the part of your cell where your DNA is found (the nucleus) and therefore will not change or alter your DNA.

Will this vaccine give me COVID-19?

No, this is not a live vaccine and will not give you COVID-19. The vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV2 and cannot give you COVID-19.

Is this vaccine effective in preventing COVID-19?

Yes, according to the latest trial information, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection. The vaccine requires two injections 21 days apart to give you protection.

Do I have to get the second (booster) vaccine?

Yes, in order to provide you with immunity (protection), the Pfizer vaccine requires a second injection 21 days after the first dose. The manufacture recommends that you adhere as close to the 21 day period as possible +/- 2 days.

How long does the vaccine last?

The exact duration is unknown at this time; however, information suggests the vaccine is effective for at least 3 months.

If I get the vaccine, do I still have to wear a mask?

Yes, even if you take the COVID-19 vaccine, you will be required to follow universal masking guidelines and maintain social distancing procedures.

Is the shot painful?

You may experience redness and/or muscle pain at the site of injection.

What are the most common side effects of the vaccine?

Pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever are the most common side effects and should resolve in 2-3 days. Most people will experience more of these side effects following the administration of the second injection. It is important that recipients prepare and expect for potential side effects when receiving the vaccine. For this reason we are asking employees to schedule to take this vaccine at the end of their work week obligation (example if you are schedule to work Monday-Friday, please plan to take the vaccine on Friday or Saturday so the potential side effects do not interfere with your work schedule).

What are the serious side effects?

Rarely, severe allergic reaction may occur within minutes up to an hour of receiving the vaccine. Signs of severe allergic reaction include difficulty breathing, swelling of the face and throat, increased heart rate, rash and dizziness. There may be other serious and unexpected side effects as this vaccine is still being studied in clinical trials.

What do I do if I am experiencing adverse side effects after taking the vaccine?

If you are experiencing severe or life threatening side effects, please seek emergency care or call 911. Otherwise, please seek medical care. You will also receive information at the time of vaccination regarding how to report side effects, including utilizing the CDC's V-safe app, as well as how to use the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System.

Is the vaccine safe for pregnant women?

Pregnant women may choose to get the vaccine, however should discuss the vaccine with their healthcare provider first in order to ensure they are well-informed about the potential risks and benefits.

Is the vaccine safe for women planning to become pregnant in the next two months?

Women planning pregnancy in the next two months may choose to get the vaccine, however should discuss the vaccine with their healthcare provider first in order to ensure they are well-informed about the potential risks and benefits.

Is the vaccine safe for nursing mothers?

Yes, lactating mothers can receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Who should not get the vaccine?

You should not get the vaccine if you have had severe allergic reaction to an ingredient in the vaccine or if you had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose.

How do I know if I'm allergic to anything in the vaccine?

Vaccine ingredients can be found in the EUA by clicking [here](#).

Can I get the vaccine if I am immunocompromised?

Immunocompromised persons can choose to receive the vaccine, however they should discuss the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider first.

Am I still eligible to receive the vaccine if I tested positive for COVID-19 in the past?

People should get the COVID-19 vaccine regardless of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection. If you are currently diagnosed with COVID-19, you should wait until you have recovered from illness and can discontinue isolation (at least 10 days from symptom onset and 24 hours without fever).

Can I take the COVID-19 vaccine if I am currently sick or have COVID symptoms?

No, you will need to be free of sick symptoms, including fever, in order to be vaccinated. Temperatures will be checked at the time of vaccination and anyone with a fever will not be vaccinated.

Can I infect others with COVID-19 if I have been vaccinated?

This is unknown. Therefore, at this point we only know it protects the person getting the vaccine from getting disease symptoms. We do not know if this vaccine stops virus transmission. You should still follow universal masking and practice social distancing even with vaccination at this time.

Can I get the COVID vaccine if I recently received another vaccine, or am planning to receive another vaccine within 14 days?

The COVID-19 vaccine should not be administered at the same time as any other vaccine. A minimal interval of 14 days before or after administration with any other vaccine, including flu shots, should occur prior to COVID-19 vaccine administration.

Who decides who gets the vaccine first?

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has established a vaccine allocation protocol for the state of Alabama. Currently, healthcare workers, EMS personnel and nursing home staff will receive the first distribution of the vaccine.

Can I get the vaccine even if I do not work in direct patient care?

Yes, the vaccine is recommended for healthcare workers that work in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Do I need an appointment to get the vaccine?

Yes, vaccination is by appointment only. Your facility will provide you with scheduling information.

What do I need to bring to my appointment?

Please bring your photo ID and cell phone to your appointment if possible. You will receive instructions on how to utilize the CDC's V-Safe App, a health checker app that utilizes text messages to check-in with recipients following vaccination.

What do I need to wear?

Please wear something so that your upper arm may be accessed easily.

Will I need to sign a consent?

Yes, you will be given a consent at your appointment.

How long does the vaccine appointment take?

Your appointment will likely take 20-30 minutes due to the recommended 15 minute observation period after the vaccine is administered. Please allocate enough time in your work schedule when making your appointment. If you have a history of anaphylactic allergies, please be prepared to stay for an extended (at least 30 minutes) observation period.

Will I receive documentation that I received the vaccine?

Yes, you will be given a Vaccination Card that contains the date of your vaccine, manufacturer and lot number. You should keep this card for future reference.

Should I notify my healthcare providers if I elect to take the vaccine?

Yes, it is always a good idea to inform your healthcare provider regarding vaccines you have received.

When or how will I know if the vaccine is working?

You will not know it is working or feel any different, however in about 1-2 weeks after your vaccine you should start producing antibodies to protect you against COVID-19. Don't forget you will need a second shot in 21 days to receive the fullest protection possible.

I know there are other vaccine options coming in the future. Can I choose which COVID-19 vaccine I want to take?

Currently, the vaccine is being distributed by the Federal Government and the Alabama Department of Public Health. USA Health will be receiving the Pfizer vaccine on December 15. Another mRNA vaccine by the manufacturer Moderna is expected to receive Emergency Use Authorization in the coming weeks, however we are uncertain of when USA Health will receive the Moderna vaccine.

Where can I look to read more about the Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine?

You are encouraged to click here to read the Emergency Use Authorization. You may also visit the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>