

# COVID-19 VACCINE FACT SHEET

65 Years of Age and Older

## I'M 65 YEARS AND OLDER. CAN I GET MY VACCINE NOW?

If you're 65 and older and unable to live independently, such as being in an assisted living home, veterans' home, low-income senior housing, group home, and intermediate care facilities for those with developmental disabilities, you are considered a part of the 1A priority group. Visit the North Dakota Department of Health vaccine website for the most up-to-date information regarding priority groups.

## WHAT VACCINE CAN I RECEIVE, AND HOW EFFECTIVE WILL IT BE?

Pfizer and Moderna both have vaccines available. Pfizer reported a 95% efficacy rate, while Moderna reported a 94.1% efficacy rate. (For comparison, the chickenpox vaccine is 92% effective.)

The COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses. If you take the Pfizer vaccine, your second dose should be received approximately 21 days after the first dose. If you receive the Moderna vaccine, your second dose should be received approximately 28 days after the first dose. Your second dose must be the same brand as the first dose. It is unlikely you will be able to choose which brand of vaccine you are immunized with.

## HOW DO I KNOW THE VACCINE IS SAFE?

Safety has been a top priority through every step of COVID-19 vaccine research, development, and authorization. Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines showed no serious safety concerns or adverse effects. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable therapies, you should ask your doctor if you should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS?

You may experience:

- Pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given
- Mild fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches

(These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection.)

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccination, visit [health.nd.gov/covidvaccine](https://health.nd.gov/covidvaccine).



## HOW MUCH WILL THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE COST?

At this time, coronavirus vaccines are expected to be distributed for free. It is possible that health care providers may charge a fee to administer the vaccine. Health insurance will cover these fees. Those who are uninsured and unable to pay the administration fee cannot be turned away.

## WHAT IF I ALREADY HAD COVID-19?

A COVID-19 vaccine is still recommended because vaccinating may help prevent reinfection and lower your risk of getting sick again. You should delay vaccination until you are no longer showing signs of COVID infection.

## THE VACCINE WAS DEVELOPED SO QUICKLY. WERE THERE SAFETY SHORTCUTS?

While the development of COVID-19 vaccines has been called "Operation Warp Speed," the Food and Drug Administration has a rigorous process to assure any vaccine meets a standard of safety and efficacy before being released. The only thing shortened was the production process (warp speed).

## THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS AN MRNA VACCINE. WHAT IS THAT?

- The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are both mRNA vaccines.
- mRNA vaccines work by introducing a messenger RNA molecule into your body, which provides instructions to your cells on how to make a small harmless protein that is unique to the COVID-19 virus. Your immune system recognizes this viral protein and generates an immune response against it. It does not change your DNA.
- Vaccine developers have been working on mRNA vaccine technologies for years.