

## COVID-19 VACCINE FACTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COMMUNITY



COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus that spreads easily and can make people very sick. People with developmental disabilities and their families, friends, and supporters play an important role in preventing COVID-19 by getting a vaccine.

### What is a COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is a medicine that prevents you from getting COVID-19. Like most vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine is given by shots using a needle.

### Since they are new, how do I know COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective?

COVID-19 vaccines were tested to make sure they are safe. Many people of different ages, races, ethnicities, and medical conditions took part in this testing. The vaccines available were approved because they are safe and work to protect all who receive them.

### When will I be able to get the vaccine?

New Jersey has made plans for how the vaccine will be rolled out based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthcare workers, Direct Support Professionals, and people living in congregate care settings will be among the first to receive it. The vaccine will then be made available to other essential workers and those at high risk.

The plan to make vaccines available may change over time. For up-to-date information on New Jersey's plan, visit the [COVID-19 Vaccination page](#) on the New Jersey Department of Health's website.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**There are different versions of the vaccine. Most require 2 shots given 3 to 4 weeks apart.**

## Where and how can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine will be available at:

- Pharmacies
- Urgent Care Clinics
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Hospitals
- Local County Health Departments
- Other state and county-run sites
- Other medical clinics

Residents and workers in long-term care facilities may receive the vaccine where they live or work.

To learn more about where, how, and when you can get vaccinated, visit the [COVID-19 Vaccine page on New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub](#).

## What should I know to prepare for my vaccination appointment?

- Vaccines will be made available at no cost to those with and without health insurance. Bring your health insurance card to your appointment if you have one.
- People with I/DD who have guardians should bring written consent from a guardian to confirm permission to administer the vaccine.



## What should I expect when I get the vaccine?

There are different versions of the vaccine. Most versions require **2 shots** given 3 to 4 weeks apart to prevent COVID-19. You will receive information about which vaccine you have been given and how many shots you will need. It is important to get your second shot to be protected from COVID-19.



## What should I expect after I get the vaccine?

You may have side effects for a few days after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

It is normal to have pain or swelling in your arm. To reduce pain where you got the shot:

- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area
- Use or exercise your arm

You may have fever, chills, tiredness, or headache after getting the shot. Drink plenty of fluids and dress in light layers to help you feel better.

Talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine to help with side effects. Contact your doctor if your side effects worry you or they do not go away after a few days.



You can register for **V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker**, a smart-phone based tool that provides health check-ins after your COVID-19 vaccination. V-safe will remind you to get your second COVID-19 vaccine dose if you need one.

## How do I continue to stay safe before and after I get the vaccine?



Wear a mask in all public places



Follow social distancing guidelines



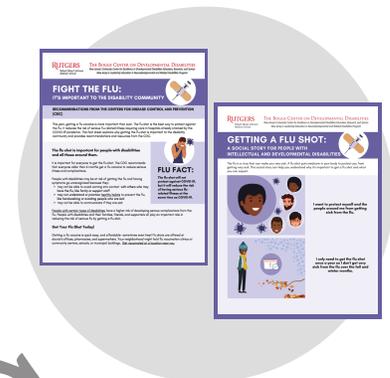
Avoid people who are sick



Practice healthy habits like frequent handwashing and using hand sanitizer



Get the flu shot to protect you from serious flu-related illness and ease the burden on doctors and hospitals



Learn more from The Boggs Center's *Fight the Flu: It's Important to the Disability Community* resources

## Resources:

- COVID-19 Vaccination (New Jersey Department of Health):  
[https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_vaccination.shtml](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml)
- New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub- COVID-19 Vaccine:  
<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>
- What to Expect At Your Vaccine Appointment (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect.html>
- What to Expect After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>
- V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>
- How to Protect Yourself and Others (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

## Do you need to help someone with a developmental disability feel comfortable about getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Check out The Boggs Center's *Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine: A Social Story for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*:

<https://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/publications/COVID19Vaccine.html>



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