## COVID-19 Vaccine

**Resources**

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| How to Get Vaccinated           | In Massachusetts all [individuals older than 12 are currently eligible](#) to receive the vaccine. The vaccine is free, and you don’t need an ID or insurance to get it.  
Information about where to get the vaccine can be found here. |
| Transportation to Vaccine Appointments | If you do not have access to a car, many locations providing vaccines are accessible by public transportation. You can use the [MBTA trip planner](#) to map your route to [vaccination locations](#).  
If you are a MassHealth member, you may also request help with [transportation to your COVID vaccine appointment](#).  
The RIDE customers can book trips to and from vaccine or testing appointments. For more information, visit [the RIDE website](#). |
| In-Home Vaccination Program     | In-home vaccinations are available for anyone who is unable to get to a vaccine location. Please click here for more information.         |
| Preparing for Your Vaccination Appointment and What to Expect Afterwards | MA Department of Public Health has information available in multiple languages with answers to questions about the vaccination process as well as information about the currently available vaccines.  
• [COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
• [How to Prepare for Your Vaccination Appointment](#) |
| Information on COVID-19 Vaccines | The [Center for Disease Control](#) (CDC) provides detailed information about the different COVID-19 vaccines and the safety of the vaccines.  
• [Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
• [Different COVID-19 Vaccines](#)  
• [Ensuring the Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines](#)  
• [Understanding how COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)  
• [Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)  
• [COVID-19 Vaccines & The Disability Community](#)  
• [Materials from the Commonwealth's multilingual public awareness campaign for the COVID-19 vaccine](#) |

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FAQs

Is the vaccine safe?

The federal government mandates a vaccine testing process to ensure the safety of all vaccines. The vaccine approval system includes multiple stages of testing and data collection. To speed up the development of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, the federal government has permitted potential vaccines to be tested in combined phases at the same time instead of one after the other. For example, usually a vaccine is first tested in a small number of people, and then if successful at this phase, the vaccine advances to the second phase of testing in which it is tested in hundreds of people.

Any vaccine approved by the FDA for distribution meets all safety and effectiveness standards. Even after the FDA authorizes a COVID-19 vaccine, it continues to monitor its use. If a concern develops, the FDA pauses use of the vaccine to study the issue and will resume distribution of the vaccine only after determining that it is safe to use.

There is a lot of false information on the Internet about the safety of a COVID vaccine. Debunked rumors can be found here. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, accurate answers can be found on the webpages of the CDC and the FDA.

Is one vaccine better to get than another?

The three vaccines are virtually identical in efficacy when comparing their ability to protect people from severe cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death. All COVID-19 vaccines passed rigorous safety reviews by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for individuals aged 18 and older; the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is authorized for individuals aged 12 and older.

I have been fully vaccinated! Do I have to keep wearing a mask and social distancing?

The vaccine does not give you immediate protection; it takes approximately two weeks after the second dose for the vaccine to reach a high level of efficacy. Additionally, while the vaccine offers you a high level of protection from getting very sick from the COVID-19 virus, data suggests that vaccinated people can still transmit the Delta variant to others and experience breakthrough infections. This informative video from MassSupport has answers to common questions about the Delta variant and what precautions you should take even if you are vaccinated.

According to CDC guidelines, if you have been fully vaccinated you can resume many activities that you participated in before the pandemic. Because of the contagiousness of the Delta variant, you should wear a mask indoors in public in areas of substantial or high transmission even if you are vaccinated. Currently, all counties in Massachusetts fall under this guidance. Additionally, some cities and towns have indoor mask mandates in place and masks are still required on public transportation, in health care settings, and schools and congregate care settings.

Wearing a mask is most important if you or someone in your household

- has a weakened immune system.
- is at an increased risk for severe disease due to age or an underlying medical condition.
- is unvaccinated.

If this applies to you or your household, you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area.
COVID-19 Vaccine

What do I need to know about getting booster shots?

All people age 18 years and older who received Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may get a booster shot. COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to all Americans will increase immunity to the virus as there is some evidence that the effectiveness of the vaccines decreases over time. The goal is for people who received Pfizer or Moderna to get their third dose six months after their second shot. Booster shots will likely also be recommended for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but further data is needed. The FDA is conducting an evaluation to determine the safety and effectiveness of booster doses of the vaccines.

Further information and answers to questions about plans for booster shots can be found on the CDC’s webpage. Find out when you are eligible for a booster shot.