

COVID-19

Vaccines Update



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Cigna Global Health has focused on delivering peace of mind to the people and businesses we serve. As the global COVID-19 vaccine landscape evolves, we are reaching out to our clients and customers with answers to frequently asked questions and regional resources for additional information.

What vaccines are currently available?

Several COVID-19 vaccines are being administered globally, including:

- › Pfizer-BioNTech
- › Moderna
- › Oxford-AstraZeneca
- › Johnson & Johnson
- › Sputnik V
- › Bharat Biotech
- › Sinovac
- › Sinopharm

These vaccines have proven to safely prevent the most severe cases and most serious symptoms of COVID-19 and we encourage you to consider whether one is right for you.

What is the difference between the various vaccines; should I choose one over the other?

All currently available vaccines are highly effective at preventing moderate to severe disease, hospitalizations and death. Long-term data is needed to better understand how long the vaccines remain effective and what the impact of COVID-19 variants might be.

All vaccines currently available fall into three categories: mRNA, viral vector or whole virus. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna use mRNA technology. Johnson & Johnson, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Sputnik V are viral vector vaccines. Bharat Biotech, Sinovac and Sinopharm

vaccines are whole virus vaccines. Regardless of which vaccine you receive, it is important to remember that they are all effective.

Dr. Ruchika Mukherjee,
Africa & Middle East Medical Director



“The vaccine is currently the safest and most effective method to protect yourself and those around you, particularly those at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.”

Who is eligible to receive the vaccine?

Eligibility as well as availability and acceptance of the vaccines vary by location across the globe. In the U.S., vaccines are now available to anyone 12 and older. We recommend contacting your local public health department or national health insurance office for more information about eligibility, availability and acceptance of the vaccines in your location. While the vaccines are currently only approved for those age 18 and older (with the exception of Pfizer-BioNTech, which is approved for those age 12 and older), there are ongoing trials that are aimed at making vaccines available to pediatric patients as young as 6 months in the near future.

How important is it for those not considered high-risk (young and healthy) to receive the vaccine?

It is incredibly important for everyone who is eligible to receive a vaccine when it is their turn to get vaccinated. Until there is a large enough portion of the population vaccinated, COVID-19 will continue to spread and variants of the virus will be able to develop.

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is a way to help end this pandemic and protect others. Getting an available vaccine helps prevent serious illness for those who become infected with COVID-19.

How long does the vaccine efficacy last?

At this time, the answer is unclear. Studies have demonstrated vaccine efficacy for at least 9 months or longer. The potential need for a booster dose is being studied, including data based on virus variants. Ultimately, some of this depends on how many and how quickly variants develop before people are vaccinated.



Dr. Daniel Ober,
Americas Medical Director

“COVID-19 vaccination is a critical part of ending this pandemic. Getting vaccinated is the most important thing for everyone to do – for themselves and for those they love. **Get vaccinated as soon as you’re able!**”

Is there cause for concern regarding adverse reactions? Are the vaccines safe for those with existing allergies?

While some people will not have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, others might develop mild side effects after vaccination. Most severe reactions are extremely rare. Patients are asked to stay at the vaccination site for 15 to 30 minutes after getting a vaccine in order to be observed and provided treatment in the rare case it is needed. We encourage individuals to discuss concerns with their health care provider.

Did COVID-19 clinical trials include diverse populations and were the outcomes or side effects different by race or gender?

Yes. Vaccine manufacturers provided demographic data for participants in their late-stage clinical trials.

Similar vaccine efficacy and safety results were observed across racial and ethnic populations.



Dr. Inge Schrever,
Europe Medical Director

“Vaccinations can prevent you from becoming seriously ill and save lives. **It is important to get vaccinated, not just for yourself, but also for each other.**”

What is Cigna’s advice for those who may be experiencing vaccine hesitancy?

While it is always best to discuss any concerns you may have with a qualified health care provider, we are sharing a few facts that may help you to make an informed decision:

- › The available **vaccines are proven to be safe and effective** against preventing most severe cases and serious symptoms of COVID-19.
- › Although developed in record time, these **vaccines have gone through the same rigorous process as every other vaccine, meeting all safety standards.** Some factors that accelerated approval were funding, prioritization, and high volume of available clinical trial participants. For example, recruiting clinical trial participants can take a long time but this was done quickly with trials for COVID-19 vaccines.
- › **Clinical trials on the vaccines in use were completed through the usual process.** No steps were skipped.
- › **Most severe reactions are extremely rare** and can often be treated. Out of an abundance of safety, patients are asked to stay 15 to 30 minutes after getting a vaccine in order to be observed and in the rare case it is needed, provided treatment. Those who experience uncomfortable symptoms within three weeks after vaccination, should contact their health care provider.
- › We encourage you to talk with your health care provider if you have concerns about the vaccines.



Dr. Dawn Soto,
Asia PAC Medical Director

“When eligible individuals take the vaccine, we are doing our part to protect vulnerable populations and to pave the way for the reopening of our schools, workplaces, borders and the economy.”

What recommendations exist for those individuals who are fully vaccinated?

Vaccination offers protection from severe COVID-19 illness; however, it does not guarantee individuals will not be infected or become re-infected with the virus. It also does not guarantee that one cannot spread the virus to an unprotected person.

Individuals should continue to utilize appropriate measures to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 including proper fitting facemasks, social distancing, frequent hand washing and avoiding large crowds, as these are known to increase the risk of spreading COVID-19.

While it may be safe to limit the use of masks in small gatherings with other vaccinated individuals, personal protection is still a critical means of reducing the spread of COVID-19, since one cannot be certain if another individual has been exposed. As the situation continues to evolve, individuals can check [CDC](#) for most up-to-date recommendations.

Individuals are encouraged to follow the guidance of their local health department.



Questions?

As always, if you have questions specific to your plan, please call the number on the back of your Cigna ID card. We are available 24/7 to support your health and well-being needs.

Together, all the way.®



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