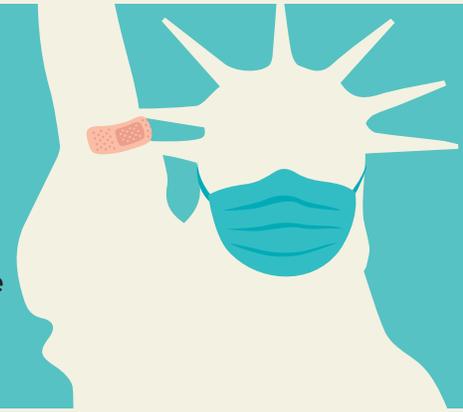# Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccines

Three COVID-19 vaccines — made by Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen — have been authorized for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). All three are safe and very effective at protecting people from severe COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you will be protected!
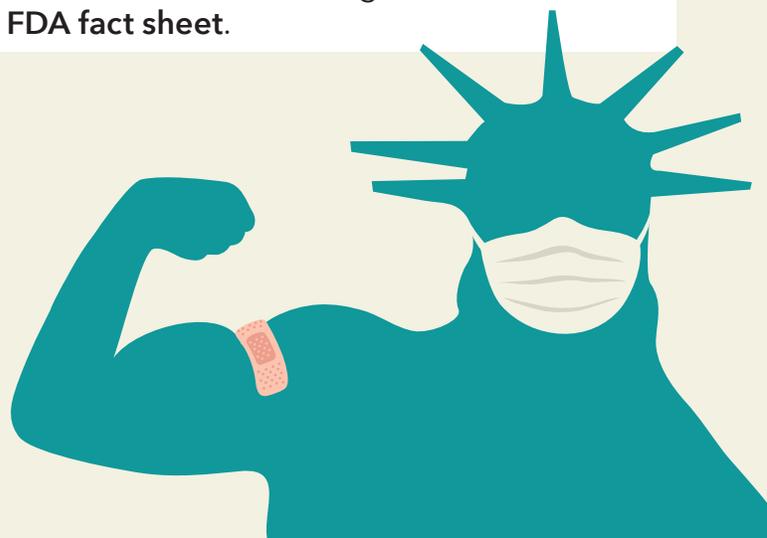
	Pfizer
What type of vaccine is it?	Messenger RNA (mRNA). To learn about mRNA vaccines, read **How the mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work**.
How many doses do I need?	Two. Your second dose should be 21 days after your first dose, but get your second dose no matter how much time has passed.
How many people were in the clinical trials?	Over 44,000
Where did the clinical trials take place?	United States, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Turkey and South Africa
Who was a part of the clinical trials?	• 10% were Black • 26% were Latino • 4% were Asian • 21% were age 65 or older • 46% had an underlying medical condition
Is the vaccine effective against variants?	The vaccine is expected to protect against the variants identified to date, but protection may not be as strong against some variants.
Will I need additional doses in the future?	We do not know yet
When is the vaccine fully effective?	Two weeks after your second shot
What are the possible side effects?	Soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the shot, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever are most common. Side effects are more common after the second dose and less common in older adults.
Who can get the vaccine?	People age 12 and older
Who should not get the vaccine?	• People who have had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or after getting the first shot • Some people with a history of allergic reactions to any vaccine or injectable medicine (talk to your health care provider to see if you can get the Pfizer vaccine)
What is in the vaccine?	mRNA, lipids, salts and sugar. For a full list of ingredients, see the **FDA fact sheet**.

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	Moderna
What type of vaccine is it?	Messenger RNA (mRNA). To learn about mRNA vaccines, read **How the mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work**.
How many doses do I need?	Two. Your second dose should be 28 days after your first dose, but get your second dose no matter how much time has passed.
How many people were in the clinical trials?	Over 30,000
Where did the clinical trials take place?	United States
Who was a part of the clinical trials?	• 10% were Black • 20% were Latino • 5% were Asian • 25% were age 65 or older • 22% had an underlying medical condition
Is the vaccine effective against variants?	The vaccine is expected to protect against the variants identified to date, but protection may not be as strong against some variants.
Will I need additional doses in the future?	We do not know yet
When is the vaccine fully effective?	Two weeks after your second shot
What are the possible side effects?	Soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the shot, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever are most common. Side effects are more common after the second dose and less common in older adults.
Who can get the vaccine?	People age 18 and older
Who should not get the vaccine?	• People who have had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or after getting the first shot • Some people with a history of allergic reactions to any vaccine or injectable medicine (talk to your health care provider to see if you can get the Moderna vaccine)
What is in the vaccine?	mRNA, lipids, salt, acetic acid, amines and sugar. For a full list of ingredients, see the **FDA fact sheet**.

	Johnson & Johnson
What type of vaccine is it?	Adenovirus vector. To learn about adenovirus vector vaccines, read **How the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine Works**.
How many doses do I need?	One
How many people were in the clinical trials?	Over 40,000
Where did the clinical trials take place?	United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and South Africa
Who was a part of the clinical trials?	• 19% were Black • 45% were Latino • 3% were Asian • 20% were age 65 or older • 41% had an underlying medical condition
Is the vaccine effective against variants?	The vaccine is expected to protect against the variants identified to date, but protection may not be as strong against some variants.
Will I need additional doses in the future?	We do not know yet
When is the vaccine fully effective?	Two weeks after your shot
What are the possible side effects?	• Soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the shot, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever are most common. Side effects are less common in older adults. • There is a very low risk of a rare type of blood clot. For more information, read **Update on the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine**.
Who can get the vaccine?	People age 18 and older
Who should not get the vaccine?	• People who have had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine • Some people with a history of allergic reactions to any vaccine or injectable medicine (talk to your health care provider to see if you can get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine)
What is in the vaccine?	Adenovirus, salts, alcohols, polysorbate 80, hydrochloric acid and amino acids. For a full list of ingredients, see the **FDA Fact Sheet**.

For more information, visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccine**.