

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

What is the status of the COVID-19 vaccines?

- Vaccines developed by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, and Janssen (which are very similar in safety) are the only COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization in US and Puerto Rico.
- Over 50 other vaccines are currently under development with high potential (e.g. AstraZeneca, etc).
- Around 15% of the Puertorrican population have already received the vaccines since December 15, and availability is expected to increase over time.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccine stimulate an immune response in your body. Your body then has the immunity to fight off the actual infection if and when you get exposed.

What are the different ways in which different vaccines work?

Most vaccines use a miniscule amount of the virus or bacteria to stimulate the immune response. The authorized COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are developed using the genetic material (mRNA) of COVID-19. Such vaccines provide the information to our cells to manufacture a key COVID-19 protein, which will stimulate our body to have an immune response to protect against COVID-19 infection. Janssen's vaccine works similarly, but uses a noninfective virus (adenovirus) as a vehicle to provide the genetic information necessary to produce the key COVID-19-like protein particle.

How many doses are needed and when?

- **2-doses are needed for the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines**, the second dose should be with the same vaccine as the first dose. **Only one dose** is required for the Janssen vaccine.
- **For the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines**, the second dose should ideally be taken 21 days after the first one.
- **For the Moderna vaccines**, the second dose should ideally be taken 28 days after the first one.
- The CDC and other agencies are expanding the acceptable window between the doses as may be needed weighing different considerations.

When can I get vaccinated?

- Keep informed of the procedures and priorities through your local news, PR Health Department and/or the PR National Guard to check when is your turn to vaccinate. Please, check:
<https://www.vacunatepr.com/covid-19>
<https://www.facebook.com/desaludpr/>
<https://www.facebook.com/vacunaspr/>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Medical---Health/Dra-Kendra-Caraballo-L%C3%B3pez-Epidemi%C3%B3loga-100742118222490/>
- You have priority if you fit the Phase 1A or Phase 1B criteria. People 65 years old or above can book a vaccination appointment at:
Hospital San Jorge

Via vacunacioncovid@sanjorgecwhospital.com or by calling at 787-727-1000 Ext. 4189, 4190, 4489, 4198

Hospital Auxilio Mutuo

Via lescanellas@auxiliomutuo.com or by calling at 787-758-2000 Ext. 4600

HIMA San Pablo

Via <https://himasanpablo.com/citas-covid/> or by calling 787-653-6060

VOCES- Puerto Rico

Via <https://www.vocespr.org/listadeesperavacunasacovid>

- Please, beware of scammers offering an advance turn in exchange for payment.
- If you recently got a non-COVID-19 vaccine, wait at least 14 days to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and wait 14 days after COVID-19 vaccine to get any other vaccine.

What is the cost for getting the COVID-19?

- We expect the government and other entities to cover the cost of vaccination.

What are the side effects?

You may experience one or more of the following, which is a normal reaction of your body to the injection or to generating an immune response.

- Pain at the injection site
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Muscle or joint pain
- Fever or chills

These side-effects are considered normal after any vaccine, and should not last beyond a couple days. Use any aspirin-free, pain reliever medications to treat any of these symptoms.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

- The benefits of the vaccine far outweigh any known potential risk(s) to the individual and to the community.
- From the research to date, there have not been any long-term adverse effects reported in the 6 months of monitoring. Evaluation will continue and any additional information should be available to the public in the future.
- Although the COVID-19 vaccine is new, there is a long history of safe and effective vaccines that addressed major global infectious disease.

What are the medical contraindications to get the vaccine?

- Currently, there is no medical contraindications. However, trials for the vaccine were not performed in pregnant women and children younger than 16-years old. Therefore, pregnant women and parents of children under age 16 should consult their physician before getting the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine (Moderna and Janssen vaccine should be given only to adults above 18-years old).
- People with allergies are advised to consult with their doctor or the person administering the vaccination before proceeding with the vaccination. Nonetheless, people with either pork or egg allergies should not worry, as neither of these vaccines were manufactured using these products

- To know about any precautions or contraindications regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html#Contraindications>

If I get the vaccine, can I stop wearing mask and stop practicing any other preventive measures?

- Keep in mind that although 67% (for those who received the Janssen vaccine) and 95% (for those who received either the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccines) are protected for infection 1-2 weeks after the vaccines, there is a chance you could still get infected you could still unknowingly infect members of your household or other people who have not completed their vaccinations.
- Vaccination is only one of the many tools needed to reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19. It is important to keep practicing all the preventive COVID-19 measures, such as distancing, mask use and handwashing until told otherwise and, avoid any poorly ventilated, crowded, indoor places.
- Although not proven, excessive alcohol consumption could potentially reduce your immune response and hence, protection from the vaccine. Therefore, it would be good to practice healthy habits and limit alcohol a few days before and after the vaccination.

I plan to get the vaccine; can I get only one dose?

- Currently, only the Janssen vaccine is authorized for a single dose course. The high effectiveness of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, however, is based on two doses. Therefore, it is important to receive both doses of the vaccine within the recommended time frame.

If I already got infected with COVID-19, should I get vaccinated?

- Even though rare, cases of COVID-19 reinfection have been reported. Additionally, early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long.
- A vaccine will likely provide a longer lasting immunity against the virus. However, there is no consensus or policy regarding whether and when previously infected individuals should receive the vaccine.

A new strain of COVID have been observed in some parts of the world: does this vaccine protects me against such strain?

- Study of how much protection the current vaccines offer is ongoing to determine. If the current authorized vaccines will protect you against the new variant.
- However, it seems likely that the vaccines will be effective against the current variants. In any case, the main purpose of the current vaccine is: reduce the severity of the illness if you got infected with COVID-19 and reduce the probability of hospitalization.

What documents do I need to carry for my vaccination appointment?

- Valid personal ID
- Pre-vaccination questionnaire filled

- Vaccine consent filled and signed: <https://www.vacunatepr.com/documentos-requeridos>
- Health insurance card (you will get the vaccine even if you do not have insurance)
- Check with the provider before your visit for any other requirements

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>

[https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/promising-interim-results-clinical-trial-nih-moderna-covid-19-](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/promising-interim-results-clinical-trial-nih-moderna-covid-19-vaccine#:~:text=This%20interim%20review%20of%20the,vaccine%20efficacy%20rate%20of%2094.5%25.)

[vaccine#:~:text=This%20interim%20review%20of%20the,vaccine%20efficacy%20rate%20of%2094.5%25.](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/promising-interim-results-clinical-trial-nih-moderna-covid-19-vaccine#:~:text=This%20interim%20review%20of%20the,vaccine%20efficacy%20rate%20of%2094.5%25.)

<https://www.pfizer.com/science/coronavirus/vaccine>

<https://investors.modernatx.com/news-releases/news-release-details/modernas-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-meets-its-primary-efficacy>

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-we-know-about-the-side-effects-of-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine>

<https://mailchi.mp/prpht/boletin-informativo-diciembre-2020?e=5642f79413>

<https://jharkhandstatenews.com/article/top-stories/3980/basic-questions-on-covid-vaccines-answered-by-dr-raghvendra-rao/>

<https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/notas/alrededor-del-15-de-la-poblacion-en-puerto-rico-ya-esta-vacunada-contr-el-covid-19-segun-datos-de-salud/>