



## COVID-19

# Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

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**NOTICE:** CDC now recommends that children between the ages of 5 and 11 years receive the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine. Learn more about [vaccines for children and teens](#).

### What You Need to Know

- COVID-19 vaccines are effective at helping protect against severe disease and death, including from [variants of the virus](#) that causes COVID-19 currently circulating (e.g., Delta variant).
- [If you are fully vaccinated](#) you can resume activities that you did before the pandemic. However, you should wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an [area of substantial or high transmission](#). Being fully vaccinated and wearing a mask maximizes protection from the Delta variant and possibly spreading it to others.
- You may have [side effects](#) after vaccination. These are normal and should go away within a few days.
- Everyone aged 12 years and older is recommended to get vaccinated. [Learn how to find a COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- People who are [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) are recommended to get an additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna).
- Certain groups of people are recommended to get a [Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot](#).



### COVID-19 Vaccine ChatBot

Use SmartFind chat tool to find answers to common COVID-19 vaccination questions.

[Get Started](#)

## Availability of Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines are widely accessible in the United States. Everyone aged 12 years and older should [get a COVID-19 vaccination](#) as soon as possible.

COVID-19 vaccines are [available for everyone at no cost](#). Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines get to you](#).

Many doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, and clinics offer COVID-19 vaccinations. Parents, check with your child's healthcare provider about whether they offer COVID-19 vaccination.

## Effectiveness

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines can reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities that you did before the pandemic. Learn more about what you can do [when you have been fully vaccinated](#).

Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective, especially at keeping you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. Learn more about the [benefits of getting vaccinated](#).

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes **2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection** (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19. That means it is possible a person could still get COVID-19 before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to build protection.

People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, or 2 weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. To receive the most protection, people should **receive all recommended doses** of a COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more about who is recommended to get an [additional dose](#) or a [booster dose](#).

People can sometimes get COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated. However, this only happens in a small proportion of people, even with the Delta variant. When these infections occur among vaccinated people, they tend to be mild.

Learn more about the [effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines](#).



## Safety

COVID-19 vaccines are [safe and effective](#). Vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. You may have side effects after vaccination. These are normal and should go away within a few days.

Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines have undergone and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe. COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. Read more to [bust myths and learn the facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#).

CDC has developed a new tool, **v-safe**, to help us quickly find any safety issues with COVID-19 vaccines. **V-safe** is a smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines. Learn how the federal government is [working to ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines](#).

While COVID-19 vaccines were developed rapidly, [all steps have been taken to ensure their safety and effectiveness](#).

## You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal

After COVID-19 vaccination, you may have some side effects. These are normal signs that your body is building protection. The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination, such as tiredness, headache, or chills, may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away within a few days. Learn more about [what to expect after getting vaccinated](#).

## Population Immunity

Population immunity, also known as herd immunity or community immunity, means that enough people in a community are protected from getting a disease because they've already had the disease or because they've been vaccinated.



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Population immunity makes it hard for a disease to spread from person to person. It even protects those who cannot be vaccinated, like newborns or people who are allergic to a vaccine. The percentage of people who need to have protection to achieve population immunity varies by disease.

We are still learning **how many people** need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before the population can be considered protected.

As we know more, CDC will continue to update our recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

## Variants and Vaccines

- COVID-19 vaccines approved or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) help protect against [Delta and other known variants](#).
- These vaccines are especially effective at keeping people from getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.
- To maximize protection against the [Delta variant](#) and prevent possibly spreading it to others, you should wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an [area of substantial or high transmission](#) even if you are fully vaccinated.
- We don't know how effective the vaccines will be against new variants that may arise.



### For Healthcare and Public Health

[Clinical and Professional Resources](#): Toolkits and resources for healthcare workers and public health professionals.

## Related Pages

- › [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#)
- › [Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- › [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- › [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

## FACT SHEET

# Information for Employees on Penalties for False Statements and Records



The COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) on Vaccination and Testing (29 CFR 1910.501) requires employers to inform each employee of the prohibitions of 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and of Section 17(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act, which provide for criminal penalties associated with knowingly supplying false statements or documentation (29 CFR 1910.501(j)(4)). Employers may use this fact sheet to provide the required information to employees, with translations as necessary to ensure the information is provided in a language or languages the employees understand.

OSHA standards are promulgated under the authority granted by the OSH Act. The OSH Act recognizes that OSHA's ability to protect workers' safety and health hinges on truthful reporting. For that reason, Section 17(g) of the OSH Act, 29 U.S.C. § 666(g), provides:

**Whoever knowingly makes any false statement, representation, or certification in any application, record, report, plan, or other document filed or required to be maintained pursuant to this chapter shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000, or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or by both.**

Section 1001 in Title 18 of the United States Code (*Crimes and Criminal Procedure*) also provides for criminal penalties associated with knowingly supplying false statements or documentation. The provision at 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a) states in relevant part:

**Except as otherwise provided in this section, whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the Government of the United States, knowingly and willfully**

- 1. falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact;**
- 2. makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation; or**
- 3. makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry;**

**shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 5 years.**

False statements or documents made or submitted for purposes of complying with policies required by OSHA's Vaccination and Testing ETS could fall under either or both of these statutory provisions.

The effectiveness of the protections afforded by OSHA's Vaccination and Testing ETS relies on employees providing truthful and accurate information, including, where applicable, proof of vaccination status and COVID-19 test results, to their employers, and on their employers maintaining accurate records of vaccination status and testing results. If OSHA discovers that false statements or documents have been made or submitted, it will consider referrals to the US Department of Justice for criminal prosecution in appropriate cases.

This Fact Sheet is intended to provide information about the COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard. The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards promulgated by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. However, this Fact Sheet is not itself a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations.

## FACT SHEET

# Workers' Rights under the COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing ETS



OSHA's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) covers employers with 100 or more employees and requires them to take steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Act protects workers from retaliation for exercising their rights under the ETS.

### Workplace Protections: Vaccination, Testing, and Face Coverings

Employees of employers covered by the ETS have a right to the protections afforded by the standard's requirements. Key requirements employers must follow to protect these employees include:

**Employer Policy on Vaccination.** The ETS requires covered employers to establish, implement, and enforce a written mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy with an exception for employers that instead establish, implement, and enforce a written policy that requires unvaccinated employees to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing and wear a face covering at the workplace instead of vaccination.

### Determination of employee vaccination status.

The ETS requires covered employers to determine the vaccination status of each employee, obtain acceptable proof of vaccination status, and maintain records and a roster of each employee's vaccination status.

### Employer support for employee vaccination.

The ETS requires covered employers to support vaccination by providing employees reasonable time, including up to four hours of paid time at the employee's regular rate of pay, to receive

each vaccination dose, and reasonable time and paid sick leave to recover from any side effects experienced following each dose.

**COVID-19 testing for employees who are not fully vaccinated.** The ETS requires covered employers to ensure that each employee who is not fully vaccinated is tested for COVID-19 at least weekly (if in the workplace at least once a week) or within 7 days before returning to work (if away from the workplace for a week or longer). *The ETS does not require employers to pay for any costs associated with testing.*

However, employer payment for testing may be required by other laws, regulations, or collective bargaining agreements or other collectively negotiated agreements. In addition, nothing prohibits employers from voluntarily assuming the costs associated with testing.

**Employee notification to employer of a positive COVID-19 test and removal.** Under the ETS, covered employers must: (1) require employees to promptly provide notice when they receive a positive COVID-19 test or are diagnosed with COVID-19; (2) immediately remove any employee from the workplace, regardless of vaccination status, who receives a positive COVID-19 test or is diagnosed with COVID-19; and (3) keep removed employees out of the workplace until they [meet the requirements for returning to work](#).

**Face coverings.** The ETS requires covered employers to ensure that each employee who is not fully vaccinated wears a face covering when indoors or when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes, except in certain limited circumstances. Employers must not prevent any employee, regardless of vaccination status, from voluntarily wearing a face covering unless it creates a serious workplace hazard (e.g., interfering with the safe operation of equipment).

**Information provided to employees.** The ETS requires covered employers to provide employees with the following in a language and at a literacy level the employees understand: (1) information about the requirements of the ETS and workplace policies and procedures established to implement the ETS; (2) the CDC document “[Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)”; (3) information about protections against retaliation and discrimination; and (4) information about laws that provide for criminal penalties for knowingly supplying false statements or documentation.

**Reporting COVID-19 fatalities and hospitalizations to OSHA.** The ETS requires covered employers to report work-related COVID-19 fatalities to OSHA within 8 hours and work-related COVID-19 in-patient hospitalizations within 24 hours of the employer learning about the incident.

**Availability of records.** The ETS requires covered employers to make available for examination and copying an individual’s COVID-19 vaccine documentation and any COVID-19 test results to that employee and to anyone having written authorized consent of that employee. Covered employers are also required to make available to an employee, or an employee representative, the aggregate

number of fully vaccinated employees at a workplace along with the total number of employees at that workplace.

## Protection from Retaliation

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) prohibits retaliation against employees for exercising their rights guaranteed under the Act, including filing an occupational safety or health complaint, reporting a work-related injury or illness, or otherwise exercising any rights afforded by the OSH Act.

## Who Is Protected by the OSH Act?

The OSH Act’s prohibition on retaliation (Section 11(c)) protects private sector workers, it does not cover employees of the U.S. government or State or local government employees.<sup>1</sup> However, it does cover U.S. Postal Service employees.

## What Activities Are Protected under the OSH Act?

A person may not discharge or in any manner retaliate against an employee because the employee exercised any right under the OSH Act. Here are some examples of COVID-19-related activities that are protected:

- Requesting paid time for a COVID-19 vaccination or paid time off for vaccine side effects, when paid time off is required by the ETS.
- Requesting personal protective equipment which the employee reasonably believes is required by an OSHA standard.
- Wearing personal protective equipment required or permitted by an OSHA standard.
- Reporting a COVID-19 infection or exposure to COVID-19 to an employer or OSHA.
- Reporting an unsafe condition to an employer or OSHA.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal employees are protected from retaliation for occupational safety or health activity under procedures established by their agencies pursuant to Executive Order 12196. See 29 CFR 1960.46-47. They are also protected from retaliation for whistleblowing under the Whistleblower Protection Act. For more information visit [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov). Similar protections are provided by State laws in States operating OSHA-approved State Plans. For more information about OSHA State Plans, see [www.osha.gov/stateplans](http://www.osha.gov/stateplans).

- Requesting guidance on workplace safety from an employer, OSHA, or other government entity.
- Refusing to perform a work task if the employee has a reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury, refuses in good faith to perform the task, has no reasonable alternative, and there is insufficient time to eliminate the condition through regular enforcement channels and, where possible, the employee has asked their employer to correct the hazard and it was not corrected. For more information: [www.osha.gov/workers](http://www.osha.gov/workers).

A worker cannot be fired or discriminated against for filing a complaint with OSHA. If you experience retaliation, file a complaint at [www.whistleblowers.gov](http://www.whistleblowers.gov).

### Permissible Disciplinary Action

The OSH Act does not prevent employers from taking disciplinary action against employees for engaging in activities that are not protected. For example, where an employee does not comply with their employer's policy on vaccination, that action would generally not be protected under the OSH Act. The following

examples are actions that would generally not be covered by OSHA's anti-retaliation or discrimination protections:

- Employee failure to provide acceptable documentation of vaccination status;
- Employee failure to provide acceptable weekly COVID-19 test results, when required;
- Falsifying required vaccination documentation or test results; and
- Employee failure to properly wear required face coverings.

### How to File a Complaint

If an employee believes they have been retaliated against, in violation of Section 11(c), they, or their representative, may file a complaint with OSHA. Complaints may be filed verbally or in writing. To file a complaint verbally: Visit a local area office or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742). Information on local area offices is available at [www.osha.gov/contactus/bystate](http://www.osha.gov/contactus/bystate) or can be obtained by calling OSHA at the above phone number.

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