

## Commonly asked questions and answers about the COVID-19 vaccine



### **Q. What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?**

**A.** Drugs and vaccines have to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that only safe and effective products are available to the American public. In situations when there is good scientific reason to believe that a product is safe and is likely to treat or prevent disease, the FDA may authorize its emergency use under specific circumstances. Vaccines authorized for emergency use are offered on a voluntary basis.

### **Q. What has DoD done to ensure the vaccines they are distributing is safe?**

**A.** Vaccines and therapeutics to prevent and treat diseases are developed in stages. In Phase 1 Trials researchers test an experimental drug or treatment in a small group of people for the first time. In Phase 2 Trials the experimental drug or treatment is given to a larger group of people to see if it is effective and to evaluate its safety further. In Phase 3 Trials the experimental study drug or treatment is given to very large groups of people. Researchers confirm its effectiveness, monitor side effects, compare it to commonly used treatments, and collect information that will allow the experimental drug or treatment to be used safely. Manufactures are required to submit their raw data for the FDA to review. Safety, immune response, and efficacy data from the trial stages are submitted to the FDA before they are authorized for use and distribution.

### **Q. How long will protection last following vaccination?**

**A.** We do not know how long protection will last following vaccination but it will be critically important to measure long-term protection (at least two years) in the phase 3 trials and in other groups prioritized for early vaccination. We are still learning about the duration of protection following infection with COVID-19 and it is too early to tell how long protection will last.

### **Q. Can someone get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

**A.** No, it is not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines. Vaccines against COVID-19 use inactivated virus, parts of the virus, or a gene from the virus. None of these can cause COVID-19.

### **Q. Should I get the vaccine for influenza (flu shot)?**

**A.** Yes, it is very important to get the influenza vaccine, particularly this season when both influenza viruses and COVID-19 will infect people.

### **Q. Will we still need to wear masks and practice physical distancing once a vaccine is available?**

**A.** Yes. The intent of the vaccine is to prevent the spread of COVID 19. We will still need to appropriate face coverings and practice physical distancing to limit the spread of the virus. Additionally, we will not have enough vaccine initially to vaccinate everyone who wants the vaccine and COVID-19 pandemic risks will continue. We will continue to recommend wearing masks and practicing physical distancing, for everyone, until pandemic risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

**Q. Why is only one manufacturer's vaccine available at my location?**

**A.** COVID-19 vaccines require unique shipping, storage, and handling conditions, which inform DoD planning to distribute vaccines to Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) around the globe. Both vaccines currently authorized for emergency use have equivalent effectiveness rates, but each vaccine ships in different quantities. The Pfizer vaccine ships in quantities of 975 doses, which DoD distributes to MTFs with larger, local DoD populations. The Moderna vaccine ships in quantities of 100 doses, which permits DoD to distribute it to smaller, geographically dispersed DoD populations.

**Q. How will DoD track personnel who receive a COVID vaccine?**

**A.** DoD will track COVID vaccine administration through existing medical record reporting systems.

**Q. If I already had COVID-19, should I still get a vaccine?**

**A.** Yes, because duration of immunity following COVID-19 infection is unknown, and the vaccine may be effective in protecting previously infected people.

**Q. Should children get a vaccine?**

**A.** The current vaccine trials have not studied the safety and efficacy for a child and manufactures are not currently asking the FDA for authorization to vaccinate children

**Q. Will DoD require all service members to receive the vaccine?**

**A.** No. The vaccine will be offered on a voluntary basis. Priority populations are highly encouraged to receive the vaccine. When formally licensed by the FDA, the DoD may require a vaccine for military personnel or personnel in specific fields, as is the case for the influenza vaccine.

## **Useful Links for information**

- Coronavirus: DOD Response: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>
- Official DOD health information about the vaccine: <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Combat-Support/Public-Health/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccine-Efforts/Getting-the-COVID-19-Vaccine>
- DepSecDef Vaccine Guidance Memo (Dec. 7, 2020): <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Dec/08/2002548508/-1/-1/0/CORONAVIRUS-DISEASE-2019-VACCINE-GUIDANCE.PDF>
- Operation Warp Speed (OWS): <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Operation-Warp-Speed/>