

FAQs about Timing for the COVID-19 Vaccine

Should I be vaccinated if I had a known exposure to COVID-19?

No. If you are aware of a high-risk exposure to COVID-19, you should not go to a vaccine center and put others potentially at risk. Also, any future symptoms may become confused with a vaccine reaction. You are asked to delay vaccination for 14 days from the time of exposure. If you end up COVID-positive, delay vaccination as outlined below.

If I had COVID-19 a few months ago or more, should I be vaccinated?

The CDC says yes. The CDC website reads: "At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person."

If I had COVID-19 in the past few weeks, should I be vaccinated?

Vaccination of people with known current COVID-19 infection should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) and criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation.

While there is no recommended minimum interval between infection and vaccination, current evidence suggests that reinfection is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. In other words: although vaccination does not present any additional risk to people who have recently recovered from COVID-19, it may not be all that beneficial in the short-term. Speak with your primary care provider to create a personalized vaccination plan.

What should I do if I get COVID-19 between my first and second dose of the vaccine?

Someone with COVID-19 that developed after the first dose of vaccine may receive the second dose, but that person must take all necessary precautions to ensure he or she does not put others at risk. This means that a second dose can only occur if..

- At least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms and/or a positive test result, AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- All other symptoms have improved.

That said, increasing evidence suggests it might be beneficial to postpone your second-dose appointment by 60 to 90 days if you acquire COVID-19 between vaccine appointments. This is a scenario without a straightforward solution. Should you find yourself in this position, consult with your primary care provider to arrive at a decision that feels right to you.

Please visit virtua.org for additional information and resources.

