



Covid-19 Vaccination Statement and FAQs

We want to state that as a practice **we support the distribution of all current Covid-19 vaccines and encourage everyone >16 years of age to receive it when they are able. We will also support children ages 12-15 receiving the appropriate Covid-19 vaccine if and when it is approved for this age group by the CDC.**

Following are some FAQs that we have been getting in our office that we'd like to answer as best we can.

Is there a “best” vaccine? It does not matter which one you get. There is no practical difference between them clinically, only in storage and administration details. We encourage all of our patients and their families get the most available vaccine when appropriate.

Did the speed by which the vaccines were developed make them less safe? No. The phases of trial for each vaccine were the same as for any prior vaccine. But instead of submitting each phase, waiting for peer review, then starting the next phase, these phases were rolling. That means that they started phase 2 while awaiting phase 1 reviews. This sped up the process immensely, which was necessary due to the spread of the disease. Secondly, the technology of mRNA vaccines does not use eggs or incubation as a part of the vaccine development. This allowed for faster production. The actual steps of development and observation were not delayed or rushed in a matter that altered safety. In fact, these vaccines are impressive in that they are so efficacious AND safe at the same time.

Will I shed the virus and be a risk to others after I receive the vaccine? No. mRNA vaccines are not live. They will not give you Covid-19 disease and they do not make you a risk to others. For the viral vector vaccines (J&J), this is true as well.

What can we expect when we get the vaccine? Expect 2 shots, given about 26-30 days apart. Anticipate some fever and muscle aches that can be significant for 1-2 days, especially after the second shot. For the J&J vaccine, it is only 1 shot with the same set of potential side effects.

What is the status of a Covid-19 vaccine for children? Currently, phase 3 trials for children ages 12-17 are in progress. Currently, 16 and 17 year olds can get the Pfizer vaccine only. There is no vaccine available for <16 year olds at this time. It is anticipated that there will be a vaccine for children, but maybe not until Summer/Fall of 2021. We will make every effort to be a site of distribution for this pediatric version and will encourage our patients to get this vaccine once safety data and efficacy results are complete and deem it safe and efficacious.

Do I still need to wear a mask after I get the vaccine? YES. As with all vaccines, the Covid-19 vaccine appears to be very efficacious at avoiding severe disease but is not 100% effective as prevention. Until we reach a significant number of the population (~70%) that is vaccinated, we will need to continue ALL measures of protection including social distancing, hand washing and mask-wearing. Please see the CDC website for recommendations for vaccinated people.

How long will I be protected after getting the vaccine? We don't know. It does not appear that getting the actual Covid-19 disease creates life long immunity as we have seen reinfection. The vaccine has not been around and followed long enough to say how long it will confer protection. This should not keep you from getting it. This is the same for most vaccines. That is why we have boosters. Whether boosters will be necessary for Covid-19 remains to be seen.

I'm pregnant. Can I get the vaccine? Yes! mRNA vaccines do not seem to be a threat to a fetus. It is the current recommendation of the Section of Fetal and Maternal Medicine that pregnant women be vaccinated. Please consult your delivery/OB care medical practitioner for any further questions.

I'm nursing. Can I get the vaccine? Yes! Data suggests that this may be a "two for the price of one" vaccination. Your nursing infant will get antibodies from you, not mRNA.

Who pays for the vaccine when I get it? The vaccine itself will be paid for by the federal government. There may be an administration fee charged by the agency giving the vaccine that should be paid by your insurance or if you are uninsured, reimbursed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

See <https://www.hrsa.gov/coviduninsuredclaim>

Resources:

Pima County Testing Sites:

<https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?pagelId=575060>

CDC website FAQs:

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

AZ Dept of Health and Human Services Covid-19 Roll out plan:

<https://bloximages.newyork1.vip.townnews.com/azfamily.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/a/af/aaf40e5e-1303-11eb-aa53-277993d1d518/5f8f2f83cc828.file.pdf>