

An Important Update from the Infection Prevention Team

Comparing COVID-19 Vaccinations

March 3, 2021

Similarities between the Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccinations

Administration and safety

These vaccines are both given as an injection into the muscle. Like all vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines have been rigorously tested for safety before being authorized for use in the United States.

Ingredients:

The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain live virus and cannot give you COVID-19.

Pregnancy

Data is limited on the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant/lactating women. There is no recommendation to exclude pregnant health care workers or those who are immunocompromised. These individuals should consult with their health care providers to make an informed decision.

Contraindications

You should not get the COVID-19 vaccine if you had a severe allergic reaction:

- After a previous dose of the vaccine (Pfizer and Moderna)
- To any ingredient of the vaccine

Deferrals/timing of administration

The COVID-19 vaccine should not be administered with other vaccines. Individuals should not receive other vaccines within 14 days prior to and after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine is deferred for 90 days for those who received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.

For those who are currently symptomatic or COVID-positive, the vaccine is deferred until symptom resolution (per criteria to discontinue precautions). Reinfection is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection, and thus, persons with documented acute infection in the preceding 90 days may defer vaccination until the end of this period, if desired.

The vaccine is offered regardless of an individual's history of (a)symptomatic COVID-19 positivity.

The vaccine is deferred after a known exposure until an individual's quarantine has ended. However, residents in a congregate living setting who have had a known exposure can receive the vaccine due to increased risk for contracting COVID-19.

Differences between the Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen vaccinations

Age:

The *Moderna* and *Janssen* vaccines are approved for those 18 years of age and older. The *Pfizer* vaccine is approved for those 16 years of age and older.

Timing of administration

The Janssen vaccine is a single-dose vaccine.

The second dose of the *Moderna* vaccine should be administered four weeks (28 days) after the first. The second dose of the *Pfizer* vaccine should be administered three weeks (21 days) after the first.

Persons should not be scheduled to receive the second dose earlier than recommended (ie, 21 days for Pfizer, or 28 days for Moderna). However, second doses administered within a grace period of four days earlier than the

recommended date are still considered valid. Doses inadvertently administered earlier than the grace period should not be repeated.

The second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible. However, if the recommended interval is not feasible, the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may administered up to six weeks (42 days) after the first dose. Currently, there is limited data on efficacy of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines administered beyond this interval. If the second dose is administered beyond these intervals, there is no need to restart the series.

If the second dose of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine was not received, the Janssen vaccine may be administered 28 days after receipt of first dose of either vaccine.

How the vaccine works

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines. mRNA can most easily be described as instructions for the cell to make a piece of the “spike protein” that is unique to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Since only part of the protein is made, it does not do any harm to the person vaccinated and helps the body to produce antibodies against the virus.

The Janssen vaccine is a viral vector vaccine. Vector vaccines use a modified adenovirus to deliver a gene that instructs our cells to make a SARS-CoV-2 antigen. This antigen triggers production of antibodies and a resulting immune response. A viral vector vaccine poses no threat of causing illness in humans because it has been modified.

Which vaccine is the best vaccine?

The first one you can get! All available COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing illness, hospitalization, and death related to COVID-19 infection.