

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

Jan. 19, 2021

Q1. Will NASA offer COVID-19 vaccination for NASA employees?

Currently, the agency was asked to focus on mission critical employees. NASA may at some point be able to offer vaccinations to the broader work force if the federal government makes vaccine available widely to federal agencies.

Q2. What has NASA done to enable the agency to get the vaccine?

The agency has been working with the White House Office of Management and Budget, the State Vaccine Points of Contact, and others to fill out the necessary applications to receive an allotment of vaccine. The agency was requested to turn in numbers of critical mission personnel for the initial vaccine allotment. The agency has also been updating the “cold chain” or freezers necessary to support the vaccine at all centers.

Q3. If NASA gets vaccine, how will it be distributed?

NASA’s distribution is parallel or complimentary to the public distribution, and not in place of it. Currently, NASA would be given vaccine to ensure its Critical and Essential missions can continue with maximum effectiveness. The public health agencies are prioritizing healthcare, elderly, and the most vulnerable first. NASA was asked to prioritize essential and critical mission employees to enable NASA to execute its mission. All others should continue to seek vaccinations through the local public health processes. It is not currently known when COVID-19 vaccine will be available at NASA Centers, or in what quantity

Q4. How many doses of the vaccine are needed to get immunity?

Currently, the two vaccines under Emergency Use Authorization in the United States, require a two-shot regimen. The Pfizer vaccine is 21 days apart, the Moderna vaccine is 28 days apart.

Q5. Can family members of employees receive vaccinations at NASA?

Currently, we are only expecting a limited amount of vaccine to cover our mission essential and critical employees. Family members will not be eligible to get their vaccinations through NASA.

Q6. How do we know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make a COVID-19

vaccine(s) available. Vaccines undergo a series of rigorous clinical trials using tens of thousands of study participants to generate data and other information for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine their safety and effectiveness to approve or authorize for emergency use. Following approval or authorization, many vaccine safety monitoring systems watch for adverse events or possible side effects. Visit the CDC's website for more information about [ensuring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S.](#) — including information about specific vaccine monitoring systems.

Q7. Why would I need a vaccine if I wear a mask, physically distance, wash my hands frequently to prevent the COVID-19 virus to spread?

Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask and staying at least 6 feet away from others, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations [to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Q8. Will NASA require/mandate any employee to get COVID-19 vaccine to continue work or be onsite?

At this time all COVID vaccinations are on a voluntary basis for the vast majority of employees and contractors. NASA highly recommends COVID vaccinations for everyone for your own self protection and to protect others in our work family. NASA will continue to monitor Federal Government direction related to the vaccination and will adjust our recommendations as appropriate. A very small number of employees who are entrusted with the health of astronauts just prior to launch may be required to get the COVID-19 vaccinations.

Q9. Will COVID-19 vaccine need to be given annually?

At this time, we only have information about the length of immunity for as long as people have been vaccinated from the initial trials. NASA will continue to monitor the information provided by the CDC and will follow their guidance when available.

Q10. How long will it take to prevent serious COVID-19 illness after getting a vaccine?

Generally, it takes a two to three weeks for measurable immunity to develop following vaccination, but the specific timeline depends on many variables. The CDC website is the best source for information regarding immunity following vaccination.

Q11. Will I still have to wear a mask and physically distance after COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. We expect the need for all current mitigation strategies to need to be in place for several months due to the continued risk to the population. You are still potentially a carrier and may still get infected with the virus until your body has developed sufficient antibodies. The CDC will monitor the status of the pandemic and will provide recommendations for any changes to mitigation strategies when the state of the pandemic warrants.

Q12. Once I get vaccinated, will I receive any documentation that I have gotten the vaccine?

Yes, you will receive a CDC COVID-19 vaccination card. Please keep this card available, as it may be needed in the future to show proof of vaccination for travel or other purposes.

Q13. How do we know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?

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