



# GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE WHEN IT'S AVAILABLE TO YOU!



A vaccine is an important final step in stopping COVID-19 once and for all.

Vaccines provide a safe way to build protection against diseases like COVID-19. Vaccination helps our bodies build immunity, preventing us from getting severe illness or death.

On Dec. 11, 2020, the FDA granted an “emergency use authorization” for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, a two-dose vaccine spaced several weeks apart for people 16 and older.

The United States joined Mexico, United Kingdom, Bahrain, and Canada in authorizing this vaccine, which was shown 94.6% effective in preventing COVID-19 overall. As of mid-December 2020, Moderna, Pfizer, and AstraZeneca announced successful vaccine trials and are in the process of receiving authorization from the FDA to use the vaccine.

FDA’s emergency use authorization means the agency has determined that the benefits of the product outweigh the known risks for the intended use.

*Familia*, here are some important things to keep in mind about COVID-19 vaccines:

**Vaccine safety is a priority.** Years of prior research into other coronaviruses have helped set the stage for scientists to work as quickly as possible to develop a safe, effective vaccine. Many measurements are in place to make sure a COVID-19 vaccine is as safe as possible, such as months of clinical trials with thousands of participants, safety monitoring, and diverse assessments to make sure it is safe for all adults.

**The vaccine will be free.** Individuals will be able to get COVID-19 vaccines for free through changes in Medicare and private insurance. If you are uninsured, you can be reimbursed by the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Provider Relief Fund.

**Some groups will receive the vaccine before others.** COVID-19 vaccines are expected to go to the most vulnerable groups before the general population. The CDC recommends that the following groups get the vaccine early if the supply is limited: healthcare workers, essential workers, people with underlying medical conditions, and adults older than 65.



**Vaccine distribution will happen over several months.** The first shipments of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine left Michigan manufacturers on Dec. 13, 2020, in route to all 50 states. Health care workers and long-term care facility residents started receiving vaccines as of Dec. 14. The general public can expect to receive the vaccine in the spring of 2021. With over 50 different vaccines being tested in clinical trials, it is likely that several different vaccines will be approved and distributed.

**Your *niños* may have to wait longer to get the vaccine.** Only adults participated in clinical trials, meaning that the initial vaccine is only recommended for adults, at first. However, several drug manufacturers say they will begin to test their vaccine candidates in children.

**We must keep wearing masks after vaccination.** At this time, there still isn't enough data on the vaccines to know whether people can still spread the virus after vaccination. So it'll be important to keep up safety precautions like wearing a mask, keeping physical distance, and avoiding crowded public areas and gatherings.

**The vaccine has been produced quickly because of fewer barriers.** In the past, vaccines have taken a longer time to reach the public because of a lack of funding and resources. With the COVID-19 vaccines, companies around the world have dedicated billions of dollars to help fund the efforts to fight the virus, because everyone recognizes how important it is to get immunity.

**We understand if you're still worried, hesitant, or skeptical about a COVID-19 vaccine.** We know that systemic racism causes inequities in healthcare and other parts of our society that make it harder for Latinos and other communities of color to have a fair chance to be their healthiest. Own our *Salud America!* [research review](#) took a deep dive into this issue, and pointed out these inequities and proposed some solutions.

We believe in vaccine safety, as it will have gone through many months of rigorous testing and trials. We all have a common goal – get rid of this pandemic once and for all. We trust the doctors, public health officials, and research-based organizations that say the vaccine will be safe and will help us end COVID-19. With COVID-19 vaccines, companies around the world have dedicated billions of dollars to help fund the efforts to fight the virus, because everyone recognizes how important it is to get immunity. Again, the FDA makes its vaccine authorizations based on the ideals that the benefits of the product outweigh the known risks for the intended use.

Make sure you know the facts so that you're ready to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it's available. We are all in this together.

Latinos, *juntos*, we can stop COVID-19!



Learn more from *Salud America!* at UT Health San Antonio  
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