

What You Need to Know About the COVID-19 Vaccines

Both the approved vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, are COVID mRNA vaccines which give instructions to our cells to make a harmless piece of “spike protein” which is found on the surface of the actual COVID virus. Once made, our immune system recognizes that it does not belong and begins making antibodies. This teaches the immune system to fight any future infection. Those vaccinated gain protection without having to risk the actual infection.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines DO NOT use the live virus and cannot give someone the virus.

If I’m Pregnant or Lactating, is the Vaccine for Me?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends the following:

COVID-19 vaccines should not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet criteria for vaccination based on Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended priority groups. Vaccines should also be offered to lactating individuals similar to non-lactating individuals when they meet criteria for receipt of the vaccine based on prioritization groups outlined by the ACIP.

A conversation between the patient and their clinical team may assist with decisions regarding the use of approved vaccines. Important considerations include:

- the level of activity of the virus in the community
- the potential efficacy of the vaccine
- the risk and potential severity of maternal disease, including the effects of disease on the fetus and newborn
- the safety of the vaccine for the pregnant patient and the fetus.

Vaccines currently available under the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) have not been tested in pregnant women. Therefore, there are no safety data specific to use in pregnancy. Available data suggest that symptomatic pregnant patients with COVID-19 are at increased risk of more severe illness compared with nonpregnant peers

While a conversation with your provider may be helpful, it should not be required prior to vaccination. For additional information please talk with your Desert West provider.

What's in the Vaccines?

Let's begin with what ISN'T included — there is NO aluminum, mercury or food allergens in the approved vaccines. There has been complete transparency about the actual ingredients which include:

- mRNA
- Lipids (including ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol)
- Potassium chloride
- Monobasic potassium phosphate
- Sodium chloride
- Dibasic sodium phosphate dehydrate
- Sucrose

Possible Side Effects

The most commonly reported side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines are:

- Chills
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Headache
- Injection site reaction
- Joint and/or muscle pain

These are short-term effects, similar to other vaccines, are an immune response to the ingredients and are much less risky than the COVID-19 infection.

What's the Difference Between the Two?

Pfizer

95% effective

30 mcg doses given 21 days apart

36,000+ trial participants

Approved for individuals

≥ Age 16

Stored at -112 to -76°F

Moderna

94.5% effective

100 mcg doses given 28 days apart

30,000+ trial participants

Approved for individuals

≥ Age 18

Stored at -13 to -5°F

More Questions?

If you have any other question about the COVID vaccines, please talk with your provider. We are here to help!