

EXPLAINER: MULTIPLE VACCINES

ARE SOME COVID-19 VACCINES BETTER THAN OTHERS?

1 Which COVID-19 vaccine should I get?

All of the COVID-19 vaccines approved for use by WHO and regulatory authorities are safe and highly effective at preventing serious illness and death caused by the virus. To protect your health and your loved ones, it is important to get vaccinated now with the vaccine available to you soonest.

2 Why are different COVID-19 vaccines being given to people in different countries and even in different parts of the same country?

There are currently six COVID-19 vaccines authorized by WHO. The global demand for vaccines against COVID-19 is unprecedented – it is a good thing that we have multiple vaccines available, as this will help to get more people protected against COVID-19 faster.

The vaccines being used in each country depends on the procurement decisions made by the government, donations made by other countries, or which vaccine is allocated through COVAX. It can also depend on things like the capacity of a country or area to keep vaccines at the required temperature, as different vaccines have different needs.

Whichever of the COVID-19 vaccines is made available to you, get vaccinated as soon as it is your turn.

3 I have been offered one type of COVID-19 vaccine. Should I wait until I can receive a 'better' one?

No. COVID-19 is a dangerous, life-threatening disease. It can cause serious illness, long-term health implications, and even death. If you have the chance to be vaccinated against COVID-19 with any WHO authorized vaccine, then do so as soon as you can. Waiting could put your health at risk.

4 Which COVID-19 vaccine will help end the pandemic?

Every person who is fully vaccinated regardless of the brand, will help us get closer to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. But vaccines won't end the pandemic alone. To help end the pandemic, do everything you can to stop the virus: wear a mask, avoid crowded places, clean your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, open doors and windows to keep your rooms well-ventilated, and get your vaccine as soon as it's your turn.

5 The efficacy rates of the different COVID-19 vaccines vary. Are some more effective than others?

Clinical trials did show some variation in the levels of efficacy against infection and mild disease. But all the COVID-19 vaccines authorized by WHO have a very high rate of efficacy against serious illness and death, which is their main purpose. When it is your turn, get vaccinated with whichever vaccine is available to you soonest – it will help to protect you from serious illness, long-term health implications and death. If you do get COVID-19 after you have been vaccinated, your symptoms are more likely to be mild.

6 What should you expect from the COVID-19 vaccine you receive?

All approved COVID-19 vaccines will protect against serious illness and death. They will also help reduce the likelihood of you getting infected with the virus and passing it on to others, which means that your decision to get vaccinated helps to protect those around you as well. This protection is not 100%; after you have been vaccinated you should continue to practice other protective behaviours against COVID-19 such as wearing a mask, keeping your distance from others, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding crowded places, cleaning your hands often and keeping indoor spaces well ventilated.

You may also experience some mild side effects after you have been vaccinated, such as a sore arm, head or body aches, a mild fever or tiredness. These are normal signs that your body is developing protection and normally go within a few days. Risks associated with vaccines are rare. However, the risks of unvaccinated persons catching COVID-19 with long term impacts on their health and even death, are far higher. If you have any concerns about side effects, contact your health care provider.

7 Which vaccines are best suited to address emerging variants?

We do not yet have enough data to know how well each vaccine performs against each variant, but we do know that all of the WHO-authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against serious illness and death caused by the current COVID-19 variants of concern.

For more information on vaccine effectiveness data visit the [WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts page](#).