



Getting vaccinated against COVID-19

In the first place, vaccination protects you, but ultimately it also protects your family, friends and vulnerable people in your surroundings. The more people who get vaccinated, the harder it will be for the virus to spread. Then the government can scale down the coronavirus restrictions and we'll get more and more of our freedom back.

Some people don't want to be vaccinated, either because of their beliefs or because they're worried about side effects.

If you have questions about your own specific situation, discuss them with your doctor.

Invitation

When it's your turn to be vaccinated, you'll get an invitation

When [it's time for your population group to be vaccinated](#), you'll get an invitation, either by letter or email. It will say what you have to take with you (such as your ID). It will also tell you where you can get the vaccination. This could be at a large vaccination centre run by the municipal health service (GGD), at your doctor's office or, for instance, in a nursing home.

Vaccination is voluntary

Whether or not you get vaccinated is your choice. In other words, vaccination is not compulsory. Make sure that you're well-informed, so you can make the right choice.

Good to know:

- Vaccination is free.

- You get the shot in your upper arm.

- The vaccine consists of 2 doses: you get the second dose 3 weeks after the first one. 7 days after the second dose you'll have maximum protection against COVID-19.

Make a new appointment if you

- are ill or feverish shortly before the appointment;
- if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19);
- if you've missed your appointment to be vaccinated.

Ask your doctor whether you can have the vaccine if you

- have a weak immune system, because of a medical condition or the medication you're on;
- take blood thinners or have a medical condition that means your blood doesn't clot very well;
- have previously had a serious allergic reaction to a vaccine component.

Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive

The Health Council of the Netherlands advises against vaccinating pregnant women at present because the vaccine's efficacy and safety have not been tested sufficiently for this specific group. Exceptions can be made in individual cases, for instance, when the risks of COVID-19 outweigh the possible drawbacks of vaccination. Pregnant women in this situation should discuss vaccination with their doctor. Women who are trying to conceive can get vaccinated. Women who later find out that they were pregnant at the time of vaccination will be monitored closely by the Netherlands Pharmacovigilance Centre Lareb.

Order of vaccination

Health Council has advised on who to vaccinate first

Not everybody can be vaccinated at once. To protect the most vulnerable in society and relieve the pressure on healthcare services, a start was made in January 2021 on vaccinating the following groups:

- Acute care hospital staff (staff working in intensive care units, A&E departments and on COVID-19 wards) and ambulance crews, who are directly involved in the care and treatment of COVID-19 patients.

- Care professionals working in nursing homes, small-scale residential homes and disability care homes, district nurses and social support workers.

- Nursing home residents and residents of homes for people with intellectual disabilities.

Plans for [vaccinating subsequent groups](#) will depend on factors like approval, effectiveness and delivery of vaccines.

Vaccine side effects

Chance of short-term side effects

You can experience side effects after receiving any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines. That's because the vaccine activates the body's immune system. This builds up protection against coronavirus, but it can also lead to mild symptoms. These go away within 1 to 3 days, just as with flu vaccinations.

The following side effects are common:

soreness at the injection site

headache

fatigue

muscle ache

mild fever

If you feel uncomfortable or have a high fever, you can take paracetamol.

Small risk of adverse reactions

Very occasionally after being vaccinated, someone can get an adverse reaction that hasn't occurred before. But long-term side effects are rare, because your body breaks down the vaccine within a few weeks. The vaccine then leaves your body naturally.

If you've been vaccinated and experience a reaction that isn't mild or doesn't go away quickly, [report this at mijnbijwerking.nl](#) (in Dutch).

Coronavirus rules

Keep following the rules

A start has now been made on vaccination. But we still all need to follow [the basic coronavirus rules](#):

stay 1.5 metres away from others;

wear a facemask in public indoor spaces;

avoid busy places.

Even if you've already been vaccinated, it's important to follow the rules. Because the virus is still around, and vaccination doesn't provide 100% protection.

If you get symptoms of coronavirus disease despite having been vaccinated, [get yourself tested](#). The chance that you'll get COVID-19 is very small, but you can still get infected.

If you have any more questions, call 0800 1351.

Ministry responsible

› [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#)