

## **From COVID To Independence 1.20.21 Vaccine FAQs**

### ***How safe is the vaccine?***

Prior to its approval, approximately 73,000 people participated in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine clinical trials – none of the vaccine trails reported any serious safety concerns. After you receive the vaccine, you will be monitored for 15-minutes in a waiting room to evaluate any reaction to the shot. Soreness at the injection site is normal, however, if you do experience any reactions, we encourage you to report them to the Orange County Health Agency, CDC, Othena or [vaers.hhs.gov](https://vaers.hhs.gov).

### ***Are these Messenger RNA (mRN) vaccines safe? Can they change your DNA?***

Yes, they are safe. And they do not change your DNA. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were created using a new technique called ‘messenger RNA’ (mRNA), which is technology that has been in development for years before the pandemic. Traditionally vaccines are created using dead or weakened version of the virus itself which the body learns to identify and develop immunity to. Vaccines created with mRNA don’t change your DNA, and may be better at protecting people than those made with traditional techniques.

### ***Can the vaccine give you COVID-19? Or does it make you test positive for the Coronavirus?***

No, you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. Both vaccines, created by Pfizer and Moderna, do not have any virus or other infectious material in them. The vaccine has been designed to cause your body to make copies of a harmless piece of the coronavirus with provides immunization against COVID-19

### ***How long does the vaccine last?***

The vaccine is proved to be 95% effective. Since this is a new vaccine, health experts will determine if and when people will need another vaccine in the months to come.

***What side effects to the COVID-19 vaccine did the trials find?***

Most common is pain at the injection site – about 80 percent said they had soreness where they had the vaccine injection. Fever, muscle aches and fatigue/headaches are common. Sore arm can last up to two to three days. Report it if you have side effects – Othena, vaers.hhs.gov, to the CDC or the Orange County Health Agency.

***Will the vaccine cause infertility?***

At this time, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccine could cause infertility. Further, infertility is not known to occur as a result of the natural COVID-19 disease, which indicates that immune responses to the virus – whether induced by infection or a vaccine – do not cause infertility.

***Is there a government mandate to get the vaccine?***

No. However, in the future, private organization, companies and employers may institute vaccination requirements.

***Is there anyone who shouldn't get the vaccine?***

Yes. If you are allergic to Miralax (polyethylene glycol) you should not get the COVID-19 vaccine. Also, if you recently had a different vaccine, you should wait at least 14 days before getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Those who have received the monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, should wait 90 days before getting the vaccine.

***Can I stop taking COVID-19 precautions if I get the vaccine?***

Not until we reach herd immunity, until then, we should all use precautions by practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, washing your hands, using hand sanitizer, etc.

***Where can we get more information about receiving the vaccine?***

CDC, Moderna, Pfizer and the OC Health Care Agency are great resources, as well as Othena.

### ***Who's eligible and how do I access the vaccine?***

We are in Phase 1A per state and national guidelines – protecting our front line workers with direct patient care, as well as people in assisted living and law enforcement. Recently, this phase opened it up to 65 and older – however, Orange County is prioritizing those assisting those 75 and older first. Next, people ages 65 to 74 with chronic conditions, and then 65 and older in the rest of Phase 1A. In addition, you have to live and/or work in Orange County.

### ***When I am eligible, how do I get the vaccine?***

Once you are eligible for the vaccine, individuals will need to register themselves and make an appointment through the Othena app or at [Othena.com/individuals.php](https://Othena.com/individuals.php). In addition, instead of making an appointment, people can sign up via the Othena app or website and will get an email as to when they can make an appointment as the County is prioritizing by age and health conditions.

### ***What is a Super POD?***

A Super POD is a Super Point of Dispensing – a site where there would be a lot of vaccines available to the public. Disneyland was the first POD where they are vaccinating 3,000 to 6,000 people per day, and hope to get to 7,000 to 8,000 per day. Soka University recently opened a Super Pod and will aim to deliver 3,000 to 4,000 doses per day, seven days a week. Other Super POD sites will be available soon.

In addition, the County is working diligently to setup multiple COVID-19 vaccine distribution channels, including mobile clinics, doctor's offices, medical clinics and senior centers.

### ***What is "Operation Independence?"***

Orange County has launched Operation Independence – the goal is to vaccinate everyone in the County by July 4, 2021. Vaccinations will be provided through Super PODs. The goal is to vaccinate 30,000 per day by July 4. We encourage you to tell your elected officials we need more vaccines to hit our goal!

### ***How can I volunteer to help with vaccinations?***

All are welcome to help volunteer. The County seeks medical and non-medical volunteers to help direct lines and keep traffic flowing, translation services, and assist with registration. Go to <http://www.OneOC.org> to register.

Orange County Health Agency is pre-registering two teams of volunteers at its vaccine PODs:

- First team is medically trained volunteers: physicians, nurses, PAs, dentists, behavioral health clinical staff, EMTs, and medical assistants
- General support volunteers: data entry, registration, traffic and other duties

### ***What does it mean when you're in the Othena "waiting room"?***

It's a virtual waiting room. The app will prioritize you by your age or category and time stamp as to when you registered. Expect to get an email telling you when you can receive the vaccine.

### ***Do public officials get vaccines before the elderly?***

No. Right now the County is focusing on front line and health care workers. The County wants to vaccinate the high risk populations first – like hospitals, assisted living homes, etc.

### ***Is it true that your second injection has to be from the same lot number as the first?***

The second vaccine needs to be from the same manufacturer – either Pfizer or Moderna. Do not mix Moderna and Pfizer vaccinations. As for the lot number, it always changes, so no, you wouldn't get the vaccine from the same lot number.

### ***If you got your first shot and are due for your second shot, do you get priority?***

If you got your first shot, we recommend you back to the place where you received your original shot for the second shot. They will have your records there as well.