



# Interim Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Vaccinated Against COVID-19 (August 10, 2021)

Tested, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will help us get back in control of our lives and back to the people and places we love.

There are now three vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen). The vaccines help protect you from COVID-19 and are extremely effective in preventing death and hospitalization from COVID-19 with no serious safety concerns noted in any of the clinical trials.

## When are you considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **Two weeks after your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.** These vaccines require two shots a set number of days apart. You need two doses to build up strong immunity against COVID-19. The goal of the first vaccine dose is to “prime” the immune response, which means that it gets your body ready to have the best protection against COVID-19. The second dose “boosts” the immune response to be fully protected.
- **Two weeks after a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine.** It is a single dose vaccine, so you do not need to return for a second shot.

## What should you keep doing after you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **Everyone is required to wear face coverings (regardless of vaccination status) on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation.**
- **Everyone should wear a face covering in all K-12 schools, child care, indoor settings with a large number of children or child-focused activities (e.g., children’s museums), health care settings, high density congregate settings (e.g., correction and detention facilities, homeless shelters, migrant farm camps), and large crowded indoor venues (e.g., arenas, stadiums).**
- **Everyone should wear a mask in all other indoor public spaces if you live in area of high or substantial levels of transmission as defined by the CDC until more people are vaccinated and viral transmission decreases.**
- **Parents should continue to help their unvaccinated children wear a mask indoors, wait 6 feet apart, wash hands when in public, gathering with other children, or visiting a person who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness.**

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- When parents become fully vaccinated, it does not mean that their children are fully protected.
  - [Activities](#) can be conducted in ways that lower the risk for children and their contacts, such as encouraging outdoor activities with small groups of friends.
  - [Schools](#) offer a more controlled environment, and there is evidence that physical distancing of at least 3 feet between students can safely be adopted in classroom settings where mask use is universal and other prevention measures are taken.
- **Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms or if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19](#).**
  - **People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken the immune system, should talk to their healthcare provider to discuss their activities.** They may need to keep taking all precautions to prevent COVID-19.

### What can you start doing differently after you are fully vaccinated?

- **You can gather with others who are vaccinated if in an area of low transmission as defined [by CDC](#).**
  - **You do not need to quarantine if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19 and meet the following criteria:**
    - Are fully vaccinated (i.e., at least 2 weeks after getting the second dose in a 2-dose series or one dose of single-dose vaccine)
    - Have had no symptoms from when you were exposed to someone with COVID-19
  - This includes not being restricted from work or school following an exposure to someone with COVID-19 as long as you have no symptoms.
  - You should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask around others until you get a negative test result.
  - It is very important to still monitor yourself for symptoms following an exposure. If you develop [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should get tested and isolate from other people.
- **You can travel domestically without getting tested before or after, and you do not need to self-quarantine after travel, although you should still self-isolate if you develop symptoms of COVID-19. You should still follow the [CDC's recommendations for travelling safely](#) including wearing a mask over your nose and mouth on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.**
  - **You do not need to get tested before leaving the United States (unless required by the destination) or self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States, although you should still self-isolate if you develop symptoms of COVID-19. You should still follow the [CDC's recommendations for travelling safely](#):**
    - Wear a mask over your nose and mouth
    - Stay 6 feet from others and avoid crowds
    - Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer

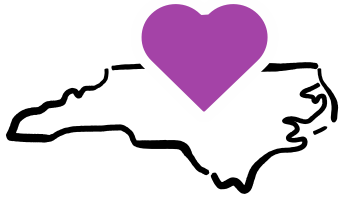
- [Show a negative test result](#) no more than 3 days before travel or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 3 months before boarding a flight to the United States.
  - Get tested 3-5 days **after** international travel.
- **You can be exempted from routine COVID-19 screening testing, if feasible.**

## What are other considerations after you have been vaccinated?

- **Determine if you need to isolate if you have symptoms after your vaccination**
  - Temporary reactions can happen after getting vaccinated against COVID-19. The temporary reactions are similar among all vaccines, although they are more common after the second dose with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.
  - Temporary reactions may include symptoms like a sore arm, headache or feeling tired and achy for a day or two and in some cases, fever or chills. These temporary reactions are normal. They are good signs that your body is building protection. Contact your doctor if the temporary reactions get worse after 24 hours or if they are worrying you and do not go away after a few days.
  - If you have symptoms that are common after vaccination – e.g., sore arm, headache or feeling tired and achy, chills – within 3 days after vaccination and have not been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 2 weeks, you can continue with your usual activities, including going to work or school, if you feel well enough. If your symptoms are not improving or continue for more than 2 days you should contact your doctor.
  - If you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 and not common after vaccination – cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell – you should *not* go to work or school, isolate, and consider getting tested for COVID-19.
  - If you have a fever of at least 100.4 °F, you should *not* go to work or school. If your fever lasts more than two days, contact your doctor and consider getting tested for COVID-19.
- **Share your positive vaccine experience with others!**
  - This [tip sheet](#) can help you create and share your own video to promote vaccination.
- **Know how you can show proof of your vaccination against COVID-19**
  - You should receive a vaccination card that tells you which COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. Keep the card in a safe spot and take a picture of it just in case it gets misplaced. Many North Carolinians can access their COVID-19 vaccine record in the [North Carolina COVID-19 Vaccine Portal](#), including anyone who: received their COVID-19 vaccine from a NC provider and provided an email address to a NC vaccine provider. If you received your vaccine from a [pharmacy participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#) or from another federal vaccine provider such as the U.S. Department of Defense, you will need to get your vaccine record directly from that provider. It is not available in the North Carolina COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. If people lose their vaccine card or have questions about accessing their vaccine records, they should contact their vaccine provider.
- **Let your health care provider or public health officials know if you have questions or concerns about the vaccine**
  - Though unlikely, if you have any adverse reactions caused by a COVID-19 Vaccine, report them to [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). Reports to VAERS help the CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. There is also a smartphone-based health checker called [V-SAFE](#) that uses

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text messaging and web surveys to do health check-ins after people receive a COVID-19 vaccination. You can report any problems you may have with a vaccine through V-SAFE.



**#StayStrongNC**

**Staying apart brings us together.  
Protect your family and neighbors.**

**Learn more at [nc.gov/covid19](https://nc.gov/covid19).**



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