FACT SHEET: Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine Benefits and Risks

Based on careful review by national experts, we know the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines far outweigh the risks. Understand the benefits and risks of receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, which may prevent you from getting COVID-19. It is your choice to receive this vaccine or another. Talk to the vaccination provider if you have questions.

About this Vaccine
This vaccine has been authorized by the FDA for emergency use given the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and has Emergency Use Authorization for people ages 18 and older. This vaccine is a single dose injected into the muscle.

Benefits of this Vaccine
In an ongoing clinical trial, this vaccine has been shown to prevent illness, hospitalization or death from COVID-19 following a single dose.

What to Expect When You Get the Vaccine
You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. Side effects may include pain or swelling at the injection site, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, nausea, or fever. Side effects should go away within a few days.

Risks Associated with this Vaccine
While there are small risks to getting the COVID-19 vaccine, the benefits of getting vaccinated outweigh the risks. Risks include:

• Rare Severe Allergic Reaction: There is a remote chance the vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction (difficulty breathing, swelling of face and throat, fast heartbeat, bad rash all over your body, dizziness, weakness), which would usually occur a few minutes to one hour after getting the dose. If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital.

• Rare Blood Clots: There have been rare occurrences of blood clots (involving blood vessels in the brain, abdomen, and legs) as well as low levels of blood cells that help your body stop bleeding, in some people who have received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. In people who developed these blood clots, symptoms began approximately 1–2 weeks after vaccination and most were women under 50 years of age. For three weeks after receiving the vaccine, be on the lookout for shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling, persistent abdominal pain, severe headaches or blurred vision, easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection. Seek medical attention if you have any of these symptoms.

• Rare Guillain-Barre Syndrome: There have been rare cases of Guillain-Barre Syndrome after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. Guillain-Barre is an illness, usually triggered by an infection, in which the body's immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weaknesses, or in the most severe cases, paralysis. Cases of Guillain-Barre Syndrome have largely been reported about 2 weeks after vaccination with Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine and mostly in males, many aged 50 years and older. You should seek medical attention if you experience weakness or tingling sensations in both legs, which may spread to the arms and upper body.

If You Experience Side Effects
If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital. Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

Vaccination Options
It is your choice to receive this vaccine and not getting it will not change your standard medical care. Other vaccines to prevent COVID-19 are available.

Boosters
Some people who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are eligible for a booster dose. Additional information is available on the CDPH COVID-19 Booster web site.

More Information