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 two-dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, which may prevent you from getting COVID-19. It is your choice to receive this vaccine. Talk to the vaccination provider if you have questions.

About this Vaccine
This vaccine has been given full approval by the FDA for people aged 16 and older. This vaccine has FDA emergency use authorization for people aged 5-15. This vaccine is a two-dose series, given three weeks apart, injected into the muscle of the upper arm or thigh.

Benefits of this Vaccine
This vaccine has been shown to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and/or death from COVID-19 for people who complete their primary series (received both doses). Note: Some people aged 12-39 may consider waiting eight weeks between the first and second dose of the mRNA vaccine series.

What to Expect When You Get the Vaccine
You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building immunity against the disease. Side effects may include an injection site reaction, headache, feeling tired, 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 Myocarditis and Pericarditis: There have been rare cases of myocarditis and pericarditis following Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination. In most of these reported cases, patients were male, young adults who reported shortness of breath and chest pain following their second dose. When they presented for medical care they responded well to medications and rest, seeing a prompt improvement of symptoms. You should seek medical attention if you experience symptoms of myocarditis or pericarditis, including chest pain, shortness of breath, or abnormal heartbeat (beating fast, fluttering, or pounding).

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. Learn more about your options by reading the Moderna COVID-19 (Spikevax) Vaccine Benefits and Risks Factsheet.

continued on the next page
Boosters
All those aged 12 and older who received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine should receive a first booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine five months after their second dose.

People aged 12-17 years old are only eligible for a first booster dose and only of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. If immunocompromised, people aged 12-17 can receive their second booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine four months after receiving their first booster dose.

People aged 18-49 who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for their primary series can receive a first booster two months after their first dose. People aged 18-49 can receive a second booster dose of Pfizer if they received two doses of Johnson & Johnson and at least four months has passed since the second dose. If immunocompromised, people aged 18-49 can receive a first booster dose three months after their additional dose and can receive a second booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine four months after their first booster dose.

People aged 50 and older are eligible for a first booster dose five months after receiving their second dose and can receive a second booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine four months after receiving their first booster dose. If immunocompromised, people aged 50 and older can receive a first booster dose three months after receiving their additional dose and can receive a second booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine four months after receiving their first booster dose.

An mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) is preferred over the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for booster vaccination. Additional information is available on the CDPH COVID-19 Booster website.

More Information