



**PACIFIC ISLANDER  
VACCINE TOOLKIT**  
Fact Sheet & Frequently  
Asked Questions

# WOVEN WITH ELDERS





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## WHY SHOULD I GET A VACCINE?

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- *What should I be doing before getting the vaccine?*
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- *When/Where can I get the COVID-19 Vaccine?*
- *What do I need to bring with me?*
- *After getting the vaccine, how bad are the side effects?*
- *Anything else I should do after getting the vaccine?*



# PACIFIC ISLANDER VACCINE TOOLKIT FACT SHEET

If you haven't been told this yet, **YOU ARE WORTH PROTECTING!**

If you are one of our treasured elders, then your survival is **CRUCIAL** to the longevity of our culture! Your influence and impact on your family and community will positively encourage others to get vaccinated and protected too. Life is a sacred gift that is worthy of protecting and there should be no shame around doing what we can to make sure the gift of life is protected! The information here is meant to help provide you with the most updated and correct vaccine information possible.





# RISK FACTORS & VACCINE SAFETY

## ***Underlying Medical Conditions***

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) lists that people who have the following medical conditions can be at an increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions (heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies)
- Obesity/overweight
- Immunocompromised individuals (from solid organ transplant, from blood/bone marrow transplants, immune deficiencies, HIV, corticosteroid users, or immune weakening medicine users)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smokers
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus & 2 diabetes mellitus
- Asthma
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Neurologic conditions (dementia)
- Liver disease
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Thalassemia

As long as you do not have severe allergies to ingredients in the vaccine, the CDC has determined individuals with underlying medical conditions can receive the COVID-19 vaccines.

## ***Increased Risks due to Systemic Issues that Affect Pacific Islanders***

Nationally, Pacific Islanders are at disproportionately higher risk of infection and death from COVID-19 at a rate 4 times higher than that of non-Hispanic whites!

There have long been issues with our medical system and it has been doubly exposed due to the current pandemic. Vaccination can help us get ahead of the infection rates & protect those of our people with health risks like those listed above.

## ***Immunocompromised Individuals***

For immunocompromised individuals, who may be at an increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, the CDC has determined it is ok for them to receive the vaccine.

Although, the CDC does not currently have information regarding vaccine safety for immunocompromised individuals.

It is also possible there will be a reduced immune response to the vaccine.

## ***Taking Medication with the Vaccine***

It's important to talk with your healthcare provider to determine if it is safe for you to receive the vaccine if you are taking other medications.



# DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT THE COVID19 VACCINE...

## ***Does the vaccine give you COVID19?***

You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine because the vaccine does not have the live virus that causes COVID-19.

## ***I heard you're immune to COVID if you've already caught it before...***

If you have already caught COVID-19, we do not currently know how long you are protected from getting COVID-19 again and it is possible you could get it again.

## ***Does the vaccine change your DNA?***

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna & Pfizer) does NOT alter your DNA or genetic information. The vaccine does not enter the nucleus, where DNA is stored, meaning it cannot alter your DNA. The viral vector COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson) also does NOT interact with your DNA.

## ***Vaccine Supply & Availability***

### ***Availability***

By now, you've heard that there are a number of issues with vaccine availability across the nation. While that is certainly still the case, local Health Jurisdictions are working hard to make access to the available vaccine supply as equitable as possible.

For Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander communities across the United States, that means that our folks are currently slated to be one of the first to be vaccinated due to the disproportionate COVID19 infection and death rates in many of our communities.

### ***Vaccine Access***

To help eligible folks find a vaccine appointment, the CDC has created a tool called [VaccineFinder](#) to help the public search for information on provider locations offering vaccination near them and learn how to make an appointment. Your local NHPI community organizations have also pledged to support connecting community members to vaccine appointments so be sure to contact them!



# I'VE BEEN TOLD NOT TO TRUST THE VACCINE JUST YET...

## *Trusted Messengers*

We understand there's a lot of confusing information out there about the vaccine and COVID-19. So much to sort through! We want to help you make the most informed decision you could make to help protect yourselves and the future of your family.

Check out the resources below to find out how the following Pacific Islander community leaders talked about COVID19 with their families and how they made the decision to pursue the vaccine as it became available.

## *NHPI People have withstood pandemics before...*

...with the help of Vaccines! To stop this pandemic, we need to use all prevention tools available to us. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to protect your health and prevent disease. Decades ago, smallpox, measles, and polio had devastating effects on many of our Pacific islands due to the lack of immunity against these diseases. It wasn't until we fully utilized a number of prevention tools and vaccines that we were able to fight back!

Vaccines work with your body's natural defenses so your body will be ready to fight the virus, if you are exposed (also called immunity). Other steps, like wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth

and staying at least 6 feet away from other people you don't live with, also help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19. Experts also think that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. These vaccines cannot give you the disease itself.





# WHY SHOULD I GET A VACCINE?

## ***Because they work!***

- Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are around 95% effective in preventing someone from getting COVID-19.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 66.3% effective at preventing COVID-19 and is highly effective in preventing hospitalization and death.
- Getting the vaccine can prevent you from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. It can potentially save your life!

## ***Because it protects you!***

- If you are diagnosed with health conditions or are immunocompromised, you could be more at risk of experiencing severe effects of COVID-19.
- Those who are older have weakened immune systems, making them more susceptible to COVID-19.
- Scientists do not currently know if getting COVID-19 once can make you immune/protect you from getting it again.

***Still asking yourself this question?  
Remember this –  
YOU ARE WORTH PROTECTING!***





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## *What should I be doing before getting the vaccine?*

- This a great opportunity for prayer and thanksgiving with your support community
- Talk with those supporting you about any fears you might have. Talking with them about the vaccine can help alleviate a lot of the fear, pressure, and shame that might come when preparing for your appointment.
- Hydrate and rest well before and after getting the vaccine. This can help your immune system build the antibodies you need to stay healthy.

## *Is the vaccine safe?*

- No one has died from the vaccine. However, over 520,000 people in the U.S. have died from the COVID-19 virus, and that number is expected to grow as infections continue to rise. Additionally, Pacific Islanders are more likely to die from the coronavirus compared to non-Hispanic whites. Getting vaccinated is the safest way to stay healthy through this pandemic.
- The vaccines were tested through clinical trials and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has reviewed the data from these trials and determined that the benefits from the vaccine outweigh any potential risks. Both the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control

& Prevention (CDC) are continuously monitoring the vaccine even after trials to ensure its safety.

- The live virus that causes COVID-19 is not in any of the vaccines, so you CANNOT get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The Moderna & Pfizer vaccines use new mRNA technology and the Johnson & Johnson is a viral vector vaccine. Each vaccine type is made a bit differently but they all teach our bodies to fight the novel coronavirus.

## *When/Where can I get the COVID-19 Vaccine?*

- Ask your provider or local public health agency if they have Community Health Workers who can help you find resources and schedule a vaccine appointment.
- If possible, sign up to get the vaccine with someone else in your household, or have a buddy you can contact for emotional support.
- Additionally, if you live in one of the regions listed below, please reach out to the organization in your local region for vaccine registration support!
  - Hawai'i – Papa Ola Lokahi
  - Oregon – UTOPIA PDX
  - Washington – Pacific Islander Community Association



## ***What do I need to bring with me?***

- Use the restroom ahead of time. Depending on where you receive your vaccine, you may have to wait in a line and then will need to wait again after the vaccine is administered for 15-30 minutes. Some sites are drive-through and/or might not have access to public restrooms.
- A government-issued photo ID
- Your insurance card
- Any additional required registration forms
- Your vaccination card: We recommend you take a photo of the front and back of your vaccination card in case it is misplaced
- Your mask and hand sanitizer
- A writing instrument – for filling out any forms or paperwork
- Fully charged devices to keep you occupied if you have to wait.
- Make it special! This is a historic moment. Dress up, bring your favorite treat, or take selfies to share your experience after!





### ***After getting the vaccine, how bad are the side effects?***

- Everyone's bodies and immune systems are unique. Some people have mild side effects, others have none.
- Side effects can include sore arm, fever, muscle aches/pains, chills, fatigue/tiredness. These can last several hours and usually resolve after a few days. Talk to your provider if you have further specific concerns or allergies to certain medications.
- After receiving the vaccine, you will be monitored for 15 minutes in case of an immediate reaction.
- In order to help reduce any pain/discomfort, the CDC recommends using a clean, damp washcloth on the area you got the shot, exercising the arm you got the shot on, drinking fluids, and dressing lightly.
- If your side effects seem worrying or continue for more than a few days, or if redness/tenderness of the shot injection site increases after the first 24 hours, the CDC recommends contacting your doctor/healthcare provider.

### ***Anything else I should do after getting the vaccine?***

- You are welcome to use your traditional medicines and remedies to help relieve sore arms or injection site pain after getting the vaccine.
- Even after being fully vaccinated, we will need to continue wearing masks in public spaces and maintain social distance with people outside of our household. This is because the current vaccines available only prevent us from experiencing symptoms, and it is unknown if we could still get infected with COVID-19 and unknowingly spread it to others. The best way to slow the spread of the virus is to maintain physical distance, wear a mask, and frequently wash hands, until scientists and public health officials find new and other ways to stop the spread.



