

Why do some COVID-19 vaccines need two doses



Vaccines have been used in public health for decades. Each vaccine that is developed has been **studied thoroughly** and tailored to the disease it is trying to prevent.

Some vaccines require 1 shot or dose. Others, like some of the current COVID-19 vaccines, require **2 shots** to get the best effectiveness. Getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is **essential** to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

Why is it Important to Get Both Doses?

1

- The **FIRST DOSE** is given as a shot in the arm.
- It helps jump-start the cells to make antibodies.
- It does this by instructing the cells to make a harmless spike protein.
- The spike protein tells the immune system to make antibodies.
- The first dose provides some protection from COVID-19.

2

- The **SECOND DOSE** of the vaccine is also put into the arm muscle.
- It contains the same formula as the first dose.
- This second vaccine gives the immune system more opportunity to fight the virus.
- By getting the second dose, the body also gets a boost to make more antibodies.

The Highest Level of Protection

Protection from COVID-19 is critical because, for some people, the virus can cause severe illness or death. Getting both doses of the vaccine increases the chances that people will have enough antibodies to protect them. As more people become protected by the vaccine, the spread of COVID-19 will slow down.



For most COVID-19 vaccines, doses are given about 3 to 4 weeks apart.

3

4

After the first dose, people will get a card with information on which vaccine they received and when to get the second dose.

For more information about how vaccines work, visit vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine or call 877-ASK-VDH3.



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