

Why you should get the first COVID-19 vaccine offered to you

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Vaccination is an important step in the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Being vaccinated for COVID-19 protects you from becoming infected and possibly infecting those around you.

COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration are being distributed by local states and communities,

and they are free. If you are eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19, you are encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

"It is so important to get this vaccine when it's offered to you," says Dr. Melanie Swift, co-chair of the Mayo Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation and Distribution Work Group. "Even if you're healthy, even if you might not be at risk for complications from COVID-19 yourself."

Dr. Swift says being vaccinated for COVID-19 offers protection for you and others.

"Our society really needs everyone to be vaccinated so that we can stop transmission. And that means the virus stops replicating. It stops mutating and making these variants that keep coming up, and we can have safe communities and start going back to normal life. These vaccines are our quickest and safest way to get immunity so we can go back to normal life and end the pandemic."

If you are unsure about your eligibility or you want to wait for others to be vaccinated, Dr. Swift offers some thoughts.

"If you're offered vaccine, you're eligible. Get the vaccine. It is really not a personal ethics test. If you're offered vaccine, the right answer is: 'Yes, thank you. I'll take the [vaccine](#).' People should not feel guilty about getting vaccinated."

Here's what you can do to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated for COVID-19 when you're invited to do so.
- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to protect yourself and others.
- Stay 6 feet apart from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Contact your state health department for more information on its plan for COVID-19 vaccination.

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