



AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION
Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation Initiative

FAQS ABOUT THE NEW NOVAVAX COVID-19 VACCINE

July 22, 2022

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine](#) as an additional option for adults ages 18 years and older receiving a primary series of COVID-19 vaccination. Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccination is an effective way to protect people from getting very sick or dying from COVID-19 and an important strategy for students, staff, and faculty on college campuses to minimize disruption to living and learning.

How does the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine work and how is it different from other kinds of COVID-19 vaccines?

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine is a [protein subunit type](#) vaccine. This means it contains pieces (proteins) of the virus that causes COVID-19. It also contains an ingredient called an adjuvant which helps train the immune system to respond to the COVID-19 virus in the future. The Novavax vaccine does **not** contain any live COVID-19 virus and **cannot** cause COVID-19 infection. Protein subunit vaccines, including the hepatitis B and whooping cough vaccines, have been used for many years in the United States and elsewhere. [Other COVID-19 vaccines](#) use messenger RNA (mRNA) or other viral genetic material to teach our immune systems to create antibodies to the COVID-19 virus

How is the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine administered?

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine [is administered in two doses, three to eight weeks apart](#). Similar to other COVID-19 vaccines, it is given as a shot in the upper arm, and both doses are required to receive maximum protection.

Is the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Protein subunit COVID-19 vaccines, including Novavax's, have been [rigorously tested for safety and efficacy](#) before being approved for use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration. The Novavax vaccine also received conditional authorization from the [European Commission](#) and [the World Health Organization](#) (WHO) in 2021 and is being used in [Canada, Australia, India](#), and other countries. If you have questions about whether you should receive a COVID-19 vaccine, contact a campus health professional or other health care provider you trust to discuss your specific concerns.

How well does the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine work?

Clinical trials demonstrate that the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine reduces the risk [of severe illness and death](#) associated with COVID-19. However, studies from other COVID-19 vaccines have shown that protection declines over time especially with the Omicron variants. All FDA-approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccines provide substantial protection against hospitalization and death associated with COVID-19.

Is the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine better than other COVID-19 vaccines?

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine uses a method of producing an immune response in the body that has been used for decades in the United States. **Some people who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19 may feel more comfortable with this type of vaccine.** The Novavax vaccine is [easier to store and ship than other types of COVID-19 vaccines](#) and may be more useful for communities that are harder to reach or don't have adequate refrigeration facilities.

Will I experience side effects from the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine?

As with other COVID-19 vaccines, some people experience [mild to moderate side effects for a day or two](#) after getting the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Side effects are more common after the second dose. Serious side effects, including [myocarditis and pericarditis](#), are rare. The risk of developing [myocarditis from COVID-19](#) remains higher than the risk of developing it from a COVID-19 vaccine. If you are concerned about allergic or other reactions, contact a campus health professional or other health care provider you trust to discuss your specific concern.

Where can I get the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine?

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine will be available in the near future. You can find a COVID-19 vaccine near you at [Vaccines.gov](#).

Can I get the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose?

At this time, the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for the [primary series only](#). It is not authorized for use as a booster dose. Approval as a booster dose is a separate process.

Who should I talk to if I have questions about COVID-19 vaccination? Where can I get more information that I can trust?

If you have questions about whether you should receive a COVID-19 vaccine, contact a campus health professional or other health care provider you trust to discuss your specific concerns. Good sources for information about COVID-19 vaccination include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, your state or local health department, and community-based health organizations with expertise in medical care and vaccination.



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