Spring 2021

Health & Welfare e-Newsletter

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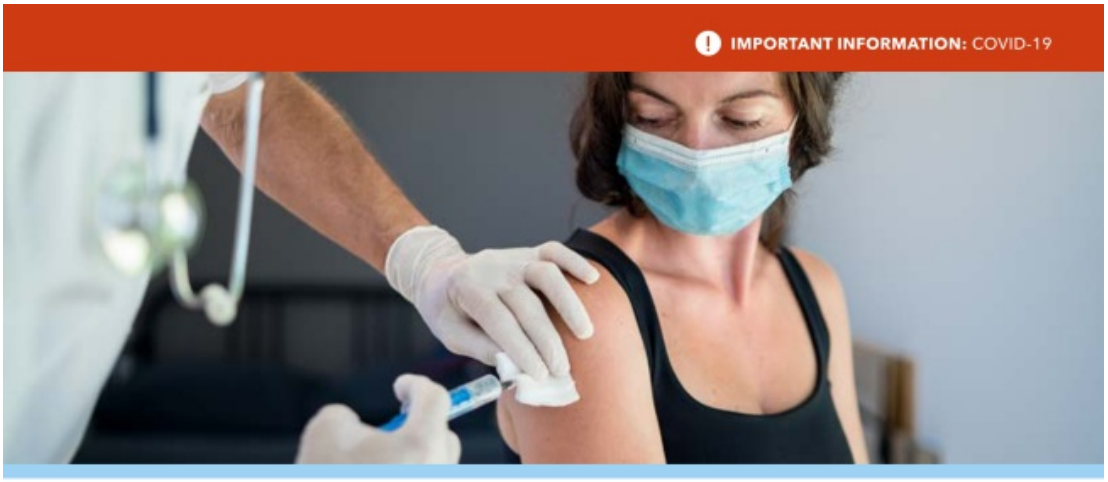

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective

The COVID-19 vaccine is a vital tool to help end the pandemic. Due to the fast arrival of the vaccine, there's been a lot of conflicting information about its safety and effectiveness. It's OK if you have questions. Here's fact-based information from our medical experts and doctors.

Vaccine safety and effectiveness

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine went through rigorous clinical trials to prove it's safe and effective to use. The clinical trials included people 16+ of all genders, races, and ethnicities. The vaccine was found to be effective and safe for all participants. The COVID-19 vaccine is held to the exact same safety standards as any other vaccine.

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 95% effective at preventing COVID-19, and the Moderna vaccine is 94.1% effective, according to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) data. In addition, Johnson & Johnson has applied for emergency use authorization for a single-dose vaccine. We'll have more information about this vaccine once the data has been shared and reviewed as part

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Learn more at **kp.org/covidvaccine**

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION: COVID-19

Vaccines

What they are and how they can save your life

Vaccines are a breakthrough of modern medicine – and are the best protection we have against many serious illnesses. The World Health Organization estimates that vaccines can save between 2 and 3 million lives every year.[1]

What is a vaccine?

Vaccines are a safe and effective way of protecting people against diseases and illnesses. When you get a vaccine, your immune system will develop resistance to that disease. You typically get a vaccine as a shot, but some can also be given as a nasal spray you inhale or a medication you drink.

How do vaccines work?

When you get a vaccine, your body will produce antibodies against that disease. Antibodies are proteins produced naturally by your immune system to fight disease. Your body will then be able to recognize and fight the disease if you're ever exposed to it later. This can significantly lower the impact of a disease or prevent you from catching it.

Why should I get vaccinated?

Vaccines are a safe way to prevent disease and save lives. Plus, they can protect you against a disease for a year, decades, or even a lifetime – depending on the specific disease. That's what makes vaccines so powerful. Rather than treating a disease after you get it, vaccines prevent you from getting sick in the first place.

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1. "Vaccines and Immunization: What is Vaccination," World Health Organization, December 31, 2020, www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination.

Learn more at **kp.org/covidvaccine**

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COVID-19 vaccines help protect you

COVID-19 vaccines are an important step in slowing the spread of the disease. We encourage you to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.

COVID-19 vaccines make a difference

FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines will help protect you, your family and friends from getting the disease. The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. This includes FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines. Keep in mind that most vaccines require 2 doses. You will need both of them to get protection from the disease. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about the vaccine.

No charge to you

You will have $0 cost-share (copays, deductibles or coinsurance) on FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines no matter where you get the vaccine. This includes when 2 doses are required. You should not get a bill for the vaccine.

- **Plans through Employers and Individual health plans, including Student Resources, Short Term Limited Liability and Exchange plans:** Members will have $0 cost-share at both in-network and out-of-network providers through the national public health emergency period.
- **Medicare plans:** Members will have $0 cost-share at both in-network and out-of-network providers through Dec. 31, 2021. Providers should not ask you for payment, up front or after you get the vaccine.
- **For Medicaid members in UnitedHealthcare Community Plans:** Members will have $0 cost-share for both in-network and out-of-network providers through the national public health emergency period.

If you get a COVID-19 vaccine during a regular office visit, your office visit will be covered according to your plan benefits. You may have a cost-share for the office visit.

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Your COVID-19 vaccine resources checklist

COVID-19 vaccines are an important step in slowing the spread of the disease. They will help protect you, your family and friends. News about vaccines in your area can change quickly. If you are in a group who can get the vaccine, check for local updates often. Be sure to make an appointment when you can. Here's a checklist of resources to help you get the vaccine.

- [ ] Get the latest vaccine information from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- [ ] Enter your zip code into our **Vaccine Resource Locator** to get information near you
- [ ] Sign up to get vaccine updates from your state
- [ ] Keep up with local news to learn where to get vaccines in your area
- [ ] Ask your doctor or local pharmacies about vaccine supply and add your name to a vaccine list if possible
- [ ] You should not be asked to pay to be put on a vaccination list

Do you know family and friends who can get the vaccine? Try reaching out to see if they need help with technology to get an appointment.

Find local resources at uhc.com/vaccinelocator

The information is a summary and is subject to change as of February 2021. This page describes general benefits we offer to all members in all states. The current FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines may not be appropriate for everyone. There are special considerations for people with certain conditions, of different ages, and who have had treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapy. If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your health care provider or visit the **CDC's Frequently Asked Questions**.

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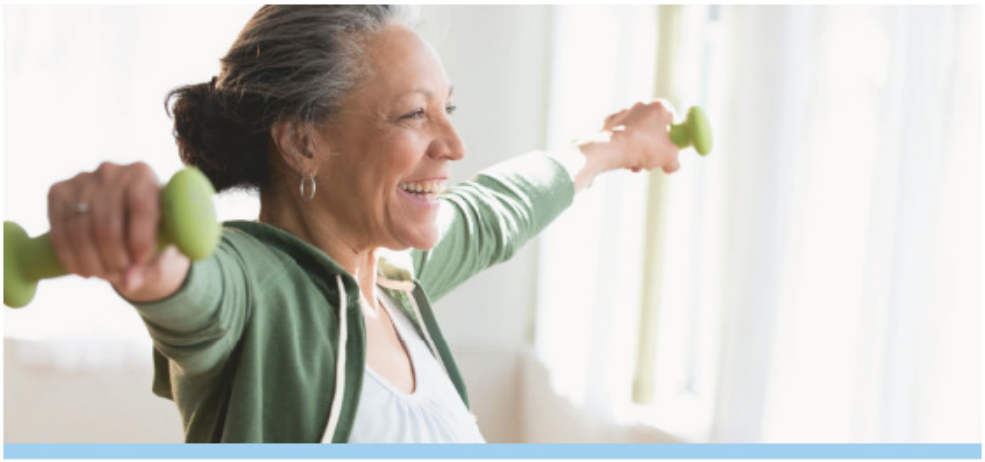

Healthy habits, happy heart

You can help avoid future heart problems by making healthy changes today. And the same habits that help keep your heart strong also reduce your risk for other conditions – another good reason to take these health tips to heart.

Know your numbers

Get regular screenings with your doctor to keep tabs on your blood pressure and body mass index (BMI). Blood pressure over 120/80 and BMI of 25 or higher are both linked to increased risk for heart disease and stroke.*

Stand up for your health

The more you sit, the higher your risk for heart problems. Try standing when you'd normally sit, like when you're watching TV – or setting a reminder on your phone to get up and move once an hour.

Get the facts on fats

Some fats are healthier than others. Unsaturated fats like olive oil and avocado are considered superfoods you should eat often – whereas you should limit saturated fats like butter, and avoid trans fats altogether.

Visit **kp.org/heart**.

*American Heart Association

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Inspiring ways to eat smart

Overwhelmed by conflicting nutrition and diet advice? The truth is, eating healthy doesn't have to be hard – and you don't have to live on salad, buy expensive vitamins, or swear off snacking. Your own nutrition intuition can lead you in the right direction.

Eat in season

In-season fruits and veggies are at peak flavor, nutrition, and supply. Seasonal eating is typically more affordable and sustainable – and makes it easy and delicious to get more fresh produce onto your plate.

DIY

Instead of ordering in, try cooking at home. By controlling fat, sugar, and salt content, home cooks tend to eat healthier than people who eat out often – even when they're not trying to.

Expand your horizons

Healthy eating doesn't have to be boring. Experiment with herbs and spices for high-impact, low-calorie flavor. Or try nutritious twists on foods you love – like zucchini spaghetti with meatballs, or taco lettuce wraps.

Visit **kp.org/foodforhealth**.

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DELTA DENTAL

How to Eat for Your Teeth

5 smile-ready food tips

1 **Snack on fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.** Chewing high-fiber foods boosts saliva flow, helping wash away food particles and decreasing acid.

Consider: celery, apple slices, carrot sticks

2 **Load up on calcium.** A key mineral for strengthening your teeth, calcium also protects your enamel from decay.

Consider: cheese, milk, leafy green vegetables, soy products, calcium-fortified juices

3 **Get enough vitamin C.** A necessary ingredient for healthy gums, vitamin C protects against gum disease and loss of adult teeth.

Consider: carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, spinach

4 **Choose lean proteins.** Phosphorous-rich foods strengthen your teeth and provide valuable protein. These foods help protect and rebuild your tooth enamel.

Consider: meat, poultry, fish, milk, eggs

5 **Enjoy a cup of tea.** When you need a boost of caffeine, try tea. As long as you don't add sugar, green and black teas can help control cavity-causing bacteria. These teas may also reduce inflammation and help prevent gum disease.

Consider: switching from coffee to black or green tea

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EF56 #104562 (rev. 3/17)

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Eye Health and Wellness

The 'New Workplace' and Its Impact on Our Eyes

It's been about a year since many of us quickly transitioned from an office to a work-from-home setting due to COVID-19. We quickly packed up our cubicle or shared desk space and began working from our couch, kitchen table or makeshift desk. This work-from-home lifestyle has us spending more time on our digital devices, especially people who are trying to help kids with online schooling, on top of their own work.

Extra time on digital devices isn't always a good thing because of the blue light emitted. If you're unfamiliar with blue light, it's the range of light with the highest amount of energy in the visible light spectrum (the light we can see). Modern devices like smartphones, tablets and computer monitors all emit blue light. While historically we've gotten our daily dose of blue light from the sun, our increased exposure to blue light from these modern devices has been linked to the onset of digital eye strain.

VSP network doctor, Jennifer Tsai, OD, notes that after blue light enters your eyes it scatters causing your eyes to have to work harder to focus the scattered light. In other words, your eyes are putting in overtime daily which can contribute to digital eye strain and not-so-fun symptoms like headaches, blurred vision and dry eyes.

Reduce Your Blue Light Exposure While Working

If you spend two or more hours a day in front of a screen, a blue-light-reducing anti-reflective coating, such as TechShield® Blue AB, on your eyeglass lenses could be helpful. TechShield Blue AB is a next-generation anti-reflective coating that filters and reflects the specific blue light wavelengths associated with digital eye strain. This near-clear coating is a great choice for people who work on computers or other digital devices all day.

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