

FAQS regarding the Johnson & Johnson vaccination update April 13, 2021

Below are answers to frequently asked questions our team members may use to communicate with patients and the community.

Why is Duke Health pausing distribution of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine?

Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Duke Health is pausing the use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine and instead will provide patients with a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine at scheduled appointments. Both the CDC and FDA continue to recommend the use of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

What are the side effects that caused the pause?

The pause is because a very small number of Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients experienced severe and rare blood clots. The adverse reaction occurred among women between the ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms appeared six to 13 days after vaccination.

How common are the most concerning potential side effects?

The blood clot side effect is extremely rare. There were just six [reported](#) cases of blood clots out of 6.8 million doses given in the U.S. as of April 12, 2021. None of these cases have occurred at Duke or in North Carolina. The recommended pause comes from an abundance of caution as the CDC and FDA review these cases.

What side effects should I be aware of if I have already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

People who've received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within six days to three weeks of vaccination should seek medical care. These adverse reactions are extremely rare, but safety is our priority.

Are there other side effects that are not serious?

People who have received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine do not need to be concerned about common reactions to vaccines that occur within a few days of being vaccinated, including soreness, fatigue, low grade fever, or nausea. These are not associated with the more severe concern with blood clots.

What should I do if I have an upcoming appointment for Johnson & Johnson?

Your scheduled appointment will stay the same. Please plan for your appointment to take up to an hour to allow for an observation period following vaccination. Because vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer both require two doses, you'll be asked to schedule a second appointment on the day you receive your first vaccination. If you wish to wait for a Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you may call the Duke Health COVID-19 hotline at 919-385-0429 to cancel or reschedule your appointment.

What does the pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine mean for the safety of other types of vaccines?

Vaccine safety is a top priority, and health officials are taking all reports of health problems following COVID-19 vaccination very seriously. The side effects associated in the small number of Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients have not been found in people who received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. The vast majority of all vaccines distributed in the U.S. have been Pfizer or Moderna and have not shown concerning side effects like severe blood clots.

Should I still get vaccinated?

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and Duke Health all agree that it's still important for as many people to receive COVID-19 vaccines as possible. They all continue recommend the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, both of which are readily available. Concerning side effects are rare and receiving a vaccination is important to increase your ability to stay safe, protect loved ones, and prevent community spread. North Carolina residents ages 16 and older can [schedule an appointment](#) at Duke for the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.