



THE COVID-19 VACCINE: WHAT TO EXPECT

Most of us are eagerly anticipating getting the COVID-19 vaccine, but you might be unsure of what to expect. To ease some concerns, we'll answer a few common questions.

When will I get the vaccine? That depends on a number of factors, including where you live, your age and your line of work. Learn about your state's plan [here](#).

What will happen when I go to get the shot? You'll be expected to wear a mask, you'll have your temperature checked and you'll be asked a few questions to confirm that you are in good health. After you receive the shot, you'll be asked to sit for a few minutes to be monitored for a reaction.

What side effects can I expect? Most people have few side effects, but some people have soreness at the injection site and a few develop flu-like symptoms. If you have a more severe reaction, seek medical help.

Will I immediately be safe from COVID-19? No. The vaccine takes time to take effect, and many of the vaccines require a two-shot process. Even after the process is complete, it's not clear exactly when you'll be fully protected.

What should I do after I receive the shot? Continue to practice COVID-19 precautions, both to protect yourself and others from the illness.

To learn more, [watch this video](#) prepared by the Indiana Department of Health and continue to listen to local and federal authorities for the most up-to-date information.

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect.html>. Accessed 8 February 2021.
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Smart Facts

27.8 MILLION

coronavirus cases in the
United States

488,000+

coronavirus deaths in the
United States.

1.7 MILLION

doses of the coronavirus vaccine
being administered daily on average.



COLORECTAL CANCER: A TOPIC NOT TO AVOID

You would think Americans would talk about the nation's third most common type of cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths, or that we would chat about a cancer that can be successfully treated 85% of the time. But we seldom talk about colorectal cancer.

Colon cancer survivor Sara Stewart says she knows why: "Colorectal cancer ... involves parts of the body we'd rather never talk about," Stewart wrote in a CNN.com article last year. But, she noted, we should talk about it, because the more we talk about colorectal cancer, the more likely we are to catch cases in time to treat them. So let's talk about colorectal cancer, starting with risk factors:

- Age is a big risk factor (people over 50 especially are encouraged to get screened), but it's becoming more common among younger people.
- Black Americans are at greater risk for the disease.
- People with a family history of colorectal cancer run a high risk.
- A low-fiber, high-fat diet increases prevalence of the disease.
- Other factors include heavy smoking and alcohol use, diabetes and a sedentary lifestyle.

But here's a catch: The disease often shows up in people with few risk factors. So, watch for symptoms, including a persistent change in bowel habits, rectal bleeding or blood in your stool, abdominal pain, fatigue and unexplained weight loss. Oh, but there's another catch: Colorectal cancer can develop with no symptoms. That's why screening is so important.

And that brings us to the dreaded colonoscopy. While it certainly isn't the only screening option, it does seem to be the one most likely to make a big difference. As the Cleveland Clinic reports, "Up to 85% of colorectal cancers could be prevented or successfully treated if everyone who is eligible for a colonoscopy got screened."

Yes, colonoscopies are unpleasant, but the unpleasantness affects you just for a couple of days. The day-before prep is no fun and the actual process will likely leave you ready to lie down for a while. But, really, the thought of the procedure is usually worse than the procedure itself.

So, if you have any symptoms or risk factors, see your doctor and ask about getting screened for colon cancer. It might be an uncomfortable conversation, and it might lead to an uncomfortable procedure, but it's worth it. As Sara Stewart said, "[A colonoscopy is] not super fun, but it's heaven compared to cancer."



"Up to 85% of colorectal cancers could be prevented or successfully treated if everyone who is eligible for a colonoscopy got screened."

Sources: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/02/health/colon-cancer-seriousness-awareness-wellness/index.html>. Accessed 8 February 2021.
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/colon-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20353669>. Accessed 8 February 2021.
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MAKE THE MOST OF PREVENTION

These days, virtually all health insurance plans provide full coverage for one preventive care visit each year. That means an annual physical and related tests and screenings typically are covered with no deductible or copay. So, you really have no excuse for not making an annual physical an actual annual event. Following are some tips that will help you make the most of that doctor's visit.

- **Go in healthy.** Don't wait until you're sick to make an appointment. Seeing the doctor when you're healthy means they can get a true sense of your general health.
- **Go in ready.** Before you see your provider, make a list of your health questions, recent health worries or recurring aches and pains. Talk through that list during your visit.
- **Bring a list of your medicine and health history.** Having up-to-date information about your health history, allergies and any medicines you take regularly (including non-prescription medicines or alternative therapies) will help you get the best care.
- **Bring a list of care providers.** Share with your caregiver the names of other doctors or providers you see.
- **Expect questions.** Your provider should ask a LOT of questions about your overall health as well about things like alcohol and tobacco use, depression, your stress level and more.
- **Get your shots.** Annual flu shots and other immunizations typically will be part of a preventive care visit.
- **Expect tests.** Your provider likely will order tests as part of the exam (cholesterol and blood sugar tests, colonoscopies, prostate exams for men, pap tests and mammograms for women, etc.) that might need to be done at another facility. Some tests might not be covered by your health insurance, so be sure to check your benefits to know what to expect.
- **Ask questions.** If your provider doesn't make recommendations about ways you can live healthier, ask.
- **Get it in writing.** Take a notebook to write down information, instructions and advice, or ask your provider to give you information in writing.
- **Stay on point or pay.** If you do raise an immediate health concern that requires treatment during a covered preventive care visit, your provider will probably charge you for that part of the visit separately.

Sources: <https://www.aarpmedicareplans.com/medicare-articles/how-prepare-your-medicare-wellness-visit.html>. Accessed 8 February 2021.
<https://thedoctorweighsin.com/10-things-to-do-to-prepare-for-a-medicare-wellness-visit/>. Accessed 8 February 2021.



National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Each year, more than 145,000 people are diagnosed with cancer of the colon or rectum, and more than 51,000 people will die ... but most of those deaths could be prevented with early detection and treatment. Because symptoms can go undetected for years, regular screenings are essential. Learn more on the Prevent Cancer Foundation website at <https://www.preventcancer.org/education/preventable-cancers/colorectal-cancer/>.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: MUSHROOMS

Once considered either exotic or rustic, the mushroom has emerged as a kitchen staple. And, why not? It's incredibly versatile and healthy, and it can lend a unique flavor to everything from simple salads to complex sauces, and from thick slabs of steak to vegan meat substitutes.

While mushrooms come in a range of varieties, grocery store shoppers probably are most familiar with button mushrooms – which make up about 90% of all mushrooms Americans consume. But, most of us also have seen big Portobello mushrooms as well as chanterelles, creminis and porcinis on menus or in stores. And, of course, mushroom fans who live near wooded areas love to find their own morels each spring.

Regardless of the type of mushrooms you consume, you'll get plenty of benefits: They're packed with vitamins, give your immune system a boost, and might even prevent some cancers.

When buying fresh mushrooms, choose ones that are firm and have a fresh, smooth appearance. They should look plump and not dried out.

Store mushrooms in the original packaging for up to a week in the refrigerator, making sure they are in a container that allows for air flow. Before preparing mushrooms, trim away any tough spots on the stems, wash the mushrooms gently under running water and pat them dry.



Source: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/270435>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
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Recipe: Mushroom Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 (10 ounce) package fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 4 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill
- 1 (17.25 ounce) package frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg, beaten

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, onion and bacon; cook and stir for about 5 minutes, or until onion and mushrooms are tender. Reduce the heat to medium, and add the cream and dill; cook and stir for about 10 more minutes. Remove from the heat, and stir in the cheese. Place one sheet of puff pastry on a well-oiled baking sheet, and pour the mushroom filling over the top. Cover with the other sheet, and press the edges together to seal. Make some holes in the top with a fork. Brush the top with beaten egg. Bake for about 40 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown. Cool, then cut into squares to serve.

Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 419; PROTEIN: 11.2G; FAT: 32.3G; CARBS: 21.7G; FIBER: 1.1G;
SODIUM: 230MG; SUGAR: 1.5G; CHOLESTEROL: 60.9MG; CALCIUM: 181MG

Source: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/88086/mushroom-pie/>. Accessed 8 February 2021.