

**Why should I get vaccinated against the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2?**

Because it helps keep you and other people healthy. Unfortunately the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is often fatal, especially among patients above 80 years of age.

**What is the purpose of the coronavirus vaccination?**

Currently there are no effective medications for treating COVID-19 infections. The vaccinations currently undergoing the approval phase are the first real opportunity to make the infectious disease manageable through medical means. The vaccination aims to ensure that fewer people get infected, and that there are fewer severe manifestations. Only then can we gradually return to normalcy.

**Do I have to get vaccinated?**

No. The vaccination is voluntary.

**Does the vaccination cost anything?**

No, the vaccination will be free regardless of insurance status. The federal government will bear the expenses of the vaccination. Furthermore, the states and federal government will share the expenses of constructing and operating the vaccination centres.

**When will it be available in North Rhine-Westphalia?**

Once a vaccination is approved, the available doses will be distributed among the member states of the EU. The federal government will then distribute the doses based on each federal state's population. The vaccination centres in North Rhine-Westphalia are ready to operate on schedule, and will start right away.

**Who will get vaccinated first – and why?**

Persons 80 years old and older, and residents of old age and care facilities, will receive priority. They are particularly at risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection, because the virus often manifests more severely for them and constitutes the greatest mortal risk.

They are followed by medical and care facility personnel, such as in emergency rooms and intensive care units at hospitals, as well as in outpatient and inpatient elderly care.

Decisions will be based on the recommendations of the federal government's Permanent Vaccination Commission (STIKO). The STIKO is based in the Robert Koch Institute, and works with the Ethics Board and Leopoldina to draft vaccination recommendations for Germany. The STIKO not only considers the benefits for vaccinated individuals, but also for the population as a whole.

**Is it even possible to vaccinate so many people in such a short time?**

Yes, the annual flu vaccinations are a good example of this.

It is important that elderly and vulnerable individuals receive the coronavirus vaccine quickly. To this end, vaccination centres will be constructed but mobile vaccination teams will also be deployed, e.g. in old age and care facilities, to vaccinate the groups within the facilities (residents and staff). These vaccination teams will be coordinated by the vaccination centres on site.

Hospital staff can be vaccinated by doctors at the respective hospital.

### **Is one vaccination enough?**

No, the coronavirus vaccine must be administered a second time just a few weeks after the first one. Otherwise it will not be effective.

### **Why will there be vaccination centres?**

Vaccination centres can provide a good organisational flow and ensure that certain COVID-19 vaccines are used and stored properly. For example, some vaccines must be stored in particularly low temperatures (down to -70 degrees).

In addition, large quantities of vaccination deliveries are used up in vaccination centres where hundreds of people are vaccinated every day before the vaccines expire. Based on what we currently know, the vaccines expire rather quickly.

You can find an overview of the vaccination centres in North Rhine-Westphalia here:  
<https://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-impfzentren-nrw>

### **During what times will the vaccination centres be open?**

The vaccination centres are expected to be open seven days per week, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. These hours may differ during the initial phase depending on the amount of vaccine available.

### **How are appointments issued?**

The plan is to use the telephone number 116 117 for the granting of appointments nationwide. There will also be a website and a smartphone app through which appointments can be made. The Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (AHIP) will be in charge of this monumental task in North Rhine-Westphalia.

### **Can I make an appointment now?**

No, appointments can only be made once the vaccination centres have received the vaccine.

### **When can I get vaccinated?**

This depends on your age and profession. People who are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 will be vaccinated first, followed gradually by other

groups. The Permanent Vaccination Commission of the Robert Koch Institute will provide further information on when specific groups can be vaccinated.

**Can essential infrastructure personnel expect to be vaccinated early?**

Yes, essential infrastructure personnel (such as the police and fire departments) are the backbone that keeps public life and the state functioning. That is why they will be given priority for the vaccination. However, they will not be vaccinated before high-risk groups, in particular the elderly.

**Can the vaccine even be stored and kept sufficiently cool?**

The logistical questions are challenging, but can be overcome. The vaccine can only be stored at room temperature for a limited time, but the vaccination centres will be equipped with the necessary cooling systems.

**Can I volunteer to help out at a vaccination centre?**

Volunteers are welcome in the vaccination centres. They can assist the AHIP as medical personnel, or aid in organising the vaccinations at the respective centre. Anyone interested in volunteering at a vaccination centre is asked to register online at [www.freiwilligenregister-nrw.de](http://www.freiwilligenregister-nrw.de). Further information can be found on the site as well.

**How much longer do I have to wear a mask?**

It's difficult to say right now. The mask serves to protect yourself and others. Once enough vaccines are available, public life will gradually return to a state of normalcy.

**When will the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 be defeated?**

The coronavirus will continue to shape our daily lives for some time. Only when enough vaccines are available and a lot of people have been vaccinated against the virus will "herd immunity" ensure that we can live with the virus in the same manner as we do with other viral diseases.

**Who can I call for information?**

Contact the state government's Coronavirus Service Hotline for information on the coronavirus pandemic and the upcoming vaccine:

0211 / 9119-1001

Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

E-mail: [corona@nrw.de](mailto:corona@nrw.de)