

HOW THE COVID-19 VACCINES WERE DEVELOPED

011321 ENGLISH

Developing a vaccine can take many years. Yet, the first COVID-19 vaccines came out less than a year from the discovery of the virus that causes COVID-19. How did that happen?

It is important to know that the vaccines completed all the steps to test them and check for safety. Nothing was skipped.

COVID-19 vaccines are going through all the usual steps for approving a vaccine.



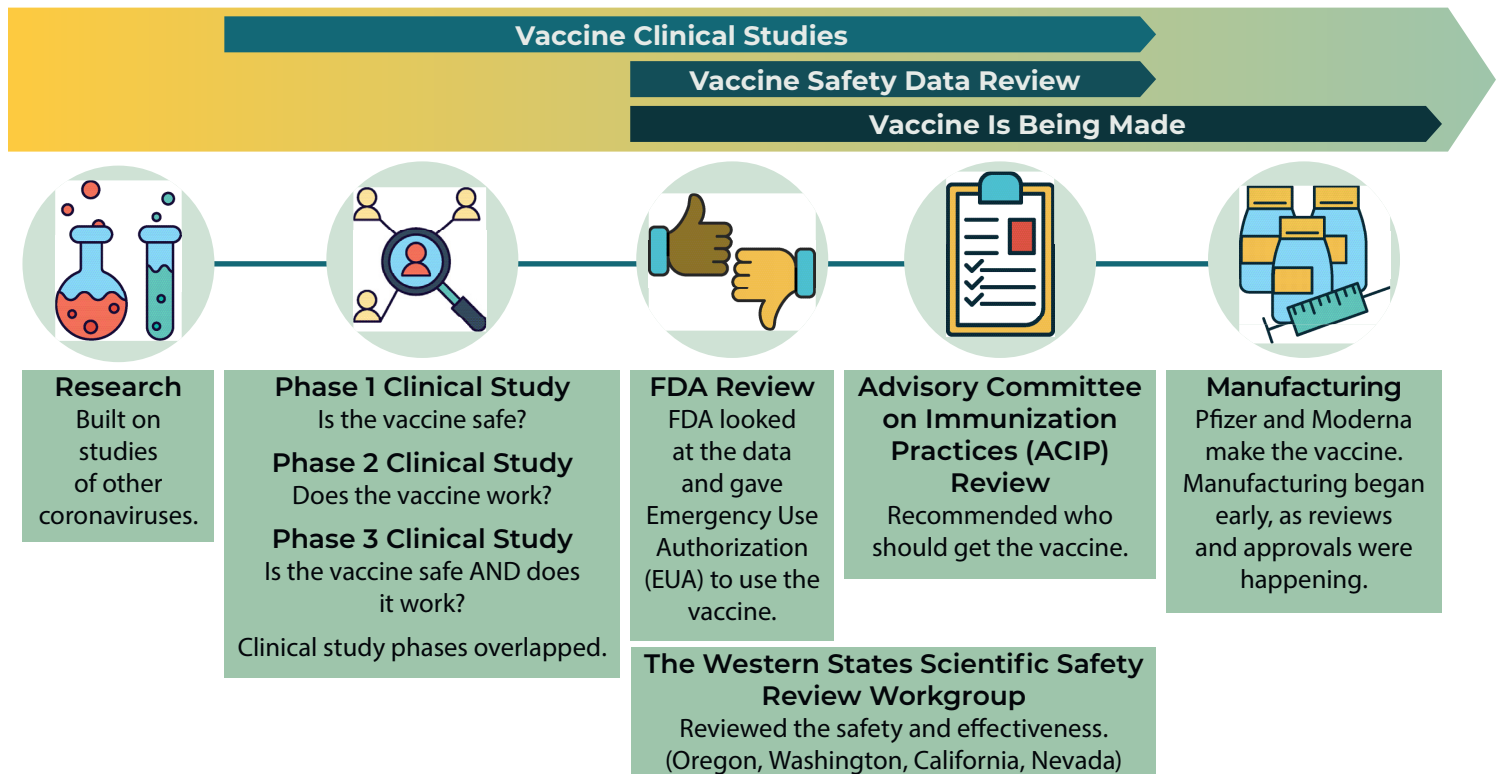
What was different this time?

This time, cooperation between researchers, the federal government and private companies shortened the usual timeline. Here are some reasons why the process was quicker for COVID-19 vaccines:

- **Scientists had a head start.** The COVID-19 vaccine effort builds on earlier worldwide research on the coronavirus (especially the SARS and MERS viruses) and advances in vaccine technology.
- **Funding was available.** Sometimes finding money for vaccine studies can take a lot of time. For COVID-19 vaccine, the federal government provided a lot of money right away to fund the vaccine effort.
- **Studies overlapped.** Researchers recruited people for all three phases of the clinical studies at the same time. Due in part to extra funding, they were able to run all three phases of the study at the same time instead of one after the other.
- **Production began early.** Backed by help from the federal government, manufacturers began making and packaging the vaccines while the clinical studies were still happening.
- **Less red tape.** The new COVID-19 vaccines are approved with an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This takes much less time than a usual approval process. Groups at the federal level are not letting anything delay them from reviewing vaccines. For example, the FDA added a lot of staff to shorten the review process from months to weeks.
- **Study vaccines worked.** Because COVID-19 is so widespread, scientists could see fairly quickly how many vaccinated people got COVID-19 compared to how many got sick without the vaccine.
- **Safety first.** A vaccine is only approved if the studies show that it is safe and that it works. As more people take the vaccine, the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will collect information about the vaccine and continue to study how well they work.



COVID-19 Vaccine Development Steps



We have more to learn

The vaccine studies are ongoing and real world information is being added all the time to what we know from the studies. Data to date show the vaccines are very safe and effective. There are still things that we need to learn about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- How long will protection from the vaccine last?
- Can vaccinated people still spread the disease to others?
- Will changes in the virus mean new vaccines need to be developed in coming years?
- Are there other rare side effects we will learn about once millions of people are vaccinated?

These are all good questions that need more study. But they are not reasons to delay getting a vaccine that is safe and effective out to people right now.

Support is available if you have questions or mixed feelings

You may feel hopeful about vaccines and keeping friends and family safe from COVID-19. You may feel worried about getting a vaccine yourself. If you are a person of color, you may be wondering if you can trust vaccines from a medical system that has broken trust with your community before. It's understandable to have concerns. Learn more and get support:

- Visit www.co.washington.or.us/vaccine for more information.
- Talk with your doctor or clinic. If you don't have a doctor, call 2-1-1 or the Washington County Health Care Resource Line at 503-846-8851.
- Call or visit Oregon's Statewide Safe + Strong Helpline for emotional support and resource referral. You don't need to be in crisis. 1-800-923-HELP (4357), linesforlife.org/obhsl/

VISIT CO.WASHINGTON.OR.US/COVID-19 FOR THE LATEST UPDATES.