JYNNEOS Vaccine for Monkeypox: Frequently Asked Questions

The JYNNEOS vaccine is recommended for people at high risk for monkeypox infection. At this time, people who had monkeypox during this outbreak are not recommended to get vaccinated.

How does the JYNNEOS vaccine work?
The JYNNEOS vaccine is approved for the prevention of monkeypox and smallpox. The vaccine contains vaccinia virus, a virus related to the monkeypox and smallpox viruses, that has been weakened, cannot copy itself in human cells, and cannot spread to other parts of the body or people. The vaccine cannot cause monkeypox, smallpox or vaccinia in the person getting vaccinated or those around them.

How is the vaccine given?
The vaccine can be given subcutaneously or intradermally. Both require getting a shot, usually in the arm. People who are younger than age 18 can get only the vaccine subcutaneously. Also, people of any age who have had keloid scars will be given the vaccine subcutaneously. A keloid scar is a thick, raised scar that can be pink, red, skin-colored or darker than the skin around it that can develop after skin damage, such as a cut, piercing or surgery. At vaccination sites where intradermal vaccine is given, people will be asked about whether they have a history of keloid scars.

What are common side effects of the vaccine?
Tiredness, headache and muscle pain can occur after both subcutaneous and intradermal JYNNEOS vaccination. Both types of vaccination commonly cause redness, swelling, soreness and itchiness at the injection site; however, there is an increased chance of these symptoms with intradermal administration, and they tend to be worse and last longer.

How many doses do I need?
The JYNNEOS vaccine is a two-dose vaccine, with at least four weeks between doses. There is no concern about the immune response to the vaccine by waiting longer than four weeks. A person will start to build protection in the days and weeks after their first dose but will not have full immunity from the vaccine until two weeks after the second dose.

How well does the vaccine work?
Clinical trial data show the vaccine should be effective in preventing monkeypox. We do not have real-world data and do not know how well the vaccine will prevent monkeypox in the current outbreak. For this reason, it is important to continue other prevention measures such as avoiding sex and other close physical contact with people who have symptoms of monkeypox.

What should I do if I have a serious health problem after vaccination?
Signs of a severe allergic reaction include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness. If you think you are having a severe allergic reaction, call 911 or go to the hospital. Call your health care provider if you have other side effects that concern you, or
call 311 to be connected to care. Your provider is required to report serious adverse reactions to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), but you can also report at vaers.hhs.gov or by calling 800-822-7967. VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.

Can people with HIV, a weakened immune system or skin conditions get vaccinated?
Yes. JYNNEOS has been studied in people with HIV and atopic dermatitis (eczema), and no severe adverse reactions were identified. People with these conditions or a weakened immune system may have more severe disease if infected with monkeypox. However, people with a weakened immune system may be less likely to build an effective immune response following vaccination, so it is important to continue other prevention measures even after vaccination.

Can people with a heart condition get vaccinated?
Clinical trials did not show an increased risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) following vaccination. However, because there is an increased risk from other vaccines, it is possible there is an increased risk from JYNNEOS in people who have three or more major risk factors for heart conditions, such as hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, high cholesterol and smoking.

Can people who are pregnant or breastfeeding get vaccinated?
Yes. People who are pregnant or breastfeeding and had a recent exposure to monkeypox should get vaccinated. There is limited information on the use of JYNNEOS in people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Studies on animals have shown no evidence of harm to a developing fetus. Because the virus in the vaccine cannot copy itself in human cells, there is likely no risk to breastfed infants.

Who cannot get vaccinated?
People who had a severe allergic reaction to a prior dose of JYNNEOS should not get vaccinated. People who have had a severe allergic reaction to gentamycin or ciprofloxacin, or to chicken or egg protein and are currently avoiding exposure to all chicken or egg products, should speak with their health care provider or a provider at the vaccination site before being vaccinated.

Should people who previously received a smallpox vaccine get vaccinated?
People who were vaccinated against smallpox prior to this outbreak should get vaccinated if they were exposed to monkeypox or are otherwise eligible for the vaccine, as protection from the smallpox vaccine may lessen over time.

Can I get the vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?
The JYNNEOS vaccine may be given before, after or at the same time as most vaccines. However, people at increased risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart), particularly young adult males, might consider waiting four weeks after their JYNNEOS vaccine to get a dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. However, if vaccination is recommended due to a known exposure to monkeypox, you should get the JYNNEOS vaccine even if you recently got the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

For more information, including about vaccine eligibility and where to get vaccinated, visit nyc.gov/monkeypox. Text MONKEYPOX to 692-692 for the most up-to-date information.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 9.1.22