

How a vaccine helps

### Why we need a vaccine

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is one of the most important steps you can take to protect yourself and your community. The more people who get vaccinated against COVID-19, the better it is for everyone. More people vaccinated means that there will be less disease in our communities. Vaccination will also help prevent the spread of new COVID-19 variants.

### What about herd immunity

Herd immunity is also called herd effect, community immunity, population immunity, or social immunity. This is when most people in a population or group are immune to a disease. Being immune means they cannot get the disease because either they got a vaccine, or they already had the disease and cannot get it again, at least for a while.

When a lot of people are immune, it helps to protect other people in the population who are not immune. Having herd immunity can stop or slow the spread of disease because it is harder for the germ to find people who are susceptible to disease and make them sick.

We do not know enough about COVID-19 to be sure herd immunity is possible. This is a new disease, so there has not been enough time to fully study immunity yet. It is possible that even with most of the population vaccinated, COVID-19 will still be able to spread in the population but at a much lower level/rate.

People can become very sick, be hospitalized, and or even die from COVID-19. This is why we do not want to rely on herd immunity happening by causing illness in everyone. Vaccination lets a person's body develop protection against a disease without having to actually get sick and [long COVID](#), hospitalization, or death.