What You Should Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

Many people have questions and concerns about the new COVID-19 vaccines. This is normal. This document gives you the facts on COVID-19 vaccines.

No safety steps have been skipped in making the COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same safety steps and studies as other vaccines. Medical researchers were able to make the vaccines quickly because of years of earlier research and money from the federal government.

COVID-19 vaccines work for everyone in authorized age groups.

All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical studies with tens of thousands of people of different ages, races, and ethnicities to make sure they were safe and worked.

The COVID-19 vaccines is free.

No matter your insurance or immigration status, you should not be charged.

The COVID-19 vaccines cannot change your DNA.

The mRNA (messenger RNA) in the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines is not able to change or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA), because it never enters the center of cells, which is where DNA is made. After the mRNA does its job, it is destroyed by the body.

The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine does not have fetal tissue in it.

This vaccine is made using a harmless cold virus, called an adenovirus. The cold virus is grown on fetal cells collected decades ago that have been maintained by the vaccine maker. Many faith groups and bioethical institutes have stated that people may ethically receive this vaccine when other vaccines are not available.

COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips.

The new COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips to track or monitor people.

COVID-19 vaccines do not have preservatives, eggs, or pork products.

COVID-19 vaccines do not contain: latex; preservatives; or any animal byproducts, including pork products or gelatin. The vaccines are not grown in eggs and do not contain egg products.

Pregnant people should get vaccinated.

Pregnant people are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease compared to people who are not pregnant. There is growing data about the safety of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and how well the vaccine works in pregnant people. Pregnancy outcomes are not affected by vaccination. Pregnant people should get vaccinated to protect themselves from COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines do not cause infertility.

If you would like to have a baby someday, you can get the COVID-19 vaccine. There is no evidence that fertility problems for males or females are a side effect

Get vaccinated even if you already had COVID-19.

We do not know how long immunity from having COVID-19 disease lasts, and we do not know if immunity varies based on how sick you were. We also do not know how variants may affect people who have had COVID-19. We are seeing people who got COVID-19 can get it again. Vaccination reduces the chance of that happening and help prevent severe disease.

Vaccination is still very important even though booster shots are now needed.

Vaccination is the best protection we have against COVID-19. Vaccination reduces the spread of the virus to those who are not vaccinated or who might get very sick. COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective at reducing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. A COVID-19 booster shot helps you maintain a high level of protection against the virus.

You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Vaccines do not have any COVID-19 virus in them

Side effects after vaccination are normal. Side effects are mild compared to having COVID-19 disease. Pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given; having headaches; feeling achy; tiredness; and low-grade fevers mean your body is responding to the vaccine. These usually last 1-2 days. It is also OK if you do not have any side effects. Each person responds differently to vaccines.
The benefits of vaccination outweigh the very rare risks of certain reactions. There have been reports of reactions like blood clotting issues with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or myocarditis/ pericarditis after an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna), but it is important to know these conditions are rare and usually treatable. Experts are constantly evaluating whether the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines are greater than these rare risks. Vaccine recommendations will change based on ongoing safety studies. Knowing about these rare reactions and how to treat them is a sign that our vaccine safety monitoring systems are working.
As we continue to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines, there may be new information or recommendations that come out, but these are not reasons to delay getting life-saving vaccines.