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Answering Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccines

Should I get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Yes. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you do end up infected after getting vaccinated, the vaccine prevents the serious illness that can lead to hospitalization or death. By getting vaccinated, you are also helping to protect the most vulnerable people among your family, friends, colleagues, and community.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. All authorized COVID-19 vaccines are held to the same safety standards as every other vaccine (including routine childhood immunizations). The authorized COVID-19 vaccines have been rigorously tested through clinical trials and have been administered to millions of people across the globe for more than nine months (as of July 2021). The clinical trials involved tens of thousands of people to make sure they safely and effectively protect people of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA are continuing to monitor the vaccines.

Are there long-term side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?

Based on a year of tracking people who have received COVID-19 vaccines, there is no evidence of long-term side effects. It's unusual for side effects from any vaccine—including COVID-19 vaccines—to appear more than 8 weeks after vaccination.

Can I get vaccinated if I have allergies?

Yes. Even people who have a history of severe allergic reactions to things like foods, pet dander, venom, latex, and pollen are recommended to get the vaccine. If you have had a previous severe allergic reaction *to another vaccine*, ask your doctor if you should get the COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your doctor if you have concerns about specific allergies.

The only allergies that are relevant to the COVID-19 vaccine are Polyethelene Glycol (PEG) and Polysorbate. PEG is used in Pfizer and Moderna's mRNA vaccines, and polysorbate is used in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. That means even if you are allergic to one of these substances, you can still get vaccinated. People who are allergic to PEG should get the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, and people who are allergic to polysorbate should get a Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccine.



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Will the shot hurt or make me sick?

Many people experience mild flu-like symptoms for one or two days. This is a normal sign that the body is building protection against the virus. If these side effects—sore arm, mild fever, chills, body aches—don't go away in three days, or you are having more serious symptoms, call your doctor.

Is it better to get natural immunity from having COVID-19 rather than from the vaccine?

No. Vaccination is the best protection, and it's safe. Even young, healthy people have experienced severe illness and long-term effects from COVID-19. The vaccine prevents you from developing chronic health problems that can come from COVID-19. And while there may be some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection lasts.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. Even people who have had COVID-19 should get vaccinated, because you can catch it more than once. While there may be some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last.

If I have an underlying medical condition, is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. In fact, it's even more important for people with medical conditions like heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, diabetes, and those that compromise the immune system, to get vaccinated because they are at higher risk for serious illness and complications from COVID-19.

Can my younger child get the COVID-19 vaccine?

As of June 2021, children ages 12 and older can get vaccinated. Clinical trials are also underway for children ages 6 months to 12 years old.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use mRNA technology, not the live virus that causes COVID-19, and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses a disabled adenovirus that is in no way related to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.



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Can I get vaccinated if I am trying to get pregnant or want to have a baby in the future?

Yes. The mRNA in the vaccine does not interact with or affect DNA in any way, and it has no effect on fertility.