**COVID-19 VACCINE: COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

**What are the kinds of COVID-19 vaccines and how do they work?**

Right now, there are three approved vaccines, from the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson companies. The ones available to you depend on overall supply and the vaccination site. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work the same way. They contain a small piece of the virus, but not the whole thing. Getting the vaccine trains your body to recognize the virus and kill it. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is different. It uses a dead common cold virus to get a small piece of the COVID-19 virus into your body. It only requires one dose. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine doesn’t protect quite as well against mild cases of COVID-19, but it does protect as well against severe illness.

**What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

It may hurt a little where you got the shot. You may also be tired, get a fever, and have head or body aches. These side effects are good! They mean your body is getting immune. Very rarely, a person has an allergic reaction to the vaccine right after getting it. That is why patients must wait 15-30 minutes after getting the vaccine.

**How can a safe vaccine be ready so quickly?**

For two main reasons. First, because of the pandemic, scientists all over the world worked together to find the vaccine. Second, the United States paid drug companies over $12 billion. This paid for all the steps to make a new drug. As soon as the companies knew a step was safe, they went onto the next. They usually wait a long time between steps.

**Can getting the COVID-19 vaccine affect my immigration status in any way?**

Everyone should get the vaccine, including immigrants, no matter their status. Getting the vaccine will not affect anything to do with immigration. You won’t be considered a public charge because of it. The law is that healthcare providers must keep patient information confidential.

**Who pays for the COVID-19 vaccine? What if I am uninsured?**

No one has to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine. It’s free whether you have private insurance, Medicaid, or no insurance.

**Does the vaccine have something in it to track or control people?**

The vaccine does not stay in your body, so there is nothing in it that can track or control you. Getting the vaccine trains your body to recognize the virus and kill it. In that process, everything from the vaccine is destroyed. To keep people healthy, Massachusetts does keep track of everyone who gets a vaccine. By law, only healthcare providers and health officials can see this.

**I already had COVID-19. Do I still need the vaccine?**

Yes. You can get COVID-19 a second time. If you were treated with antibodies or plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting the vaccine.

**Does the vaccine stay in my body?**

No. Getting the vaccine trains your body to recognize the virus and kill it. In that process, everything from the vaccine is destroyed.

**I don’t need a vaccine. My immunity is already strong, or I use natural remedies.**

It’s great that you are already healthy. But COVID-19 is a new virus that your body hasn’t met before. Getting the vaccine will train your body to recognize and kill the virus.

**Has the vaccine been tested on people like me?**

The Moderna vaccine was tested on 30,000 people. The Pfizer vaccine was tested on 37,000. The studies were evenly split between men and women. About 3000 people in both studies were Asian. Almost half of the people in the Pfizer trial had a condition such as obesity, diabetes, or heart disease.

**The vaccine is just another way for pharmaceutical companies to make money.**

The United States government already paid the pharmaceutical companies over $12 billion so that everyone can get the COVID-19 vaccine for free.

**I don’t trust the government to give me health information.**

Talk with your healthcare provider about your concerns and ask them for other trusted sources. Social media is not a good place to get health information.

**If I get the vaccine, will I be part of an experiment without my consent?**

No. By law, no one can do research on you unless they tell you what they are doing and you sign a form saying you agree to be in the experiment.

**Has anyone died from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

No one has died from the COVID-19 vaccine in the United States. But if you are over 80 years old, high risk, or very ill, talk with your healthcare provider about what to do.

**I’m trying to have a baby, pregnant, or nursing. Should I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Getting the vaccine has not made women infertile. Scientists still don’t know much about pregnancy or nursing and the vaccine. But pregnant women can get very sick with COVID-19. If you are pregnant or nursing, talk with your healthcare provider about what’s best for you and your baby.

**How long will immunity last?**

Scientists don’t know yet. It may be a couple years. If this is the case, people may need to get the vaccine every year, as is done with influenza.

**Is the COVID-19 safe for people with health conditions or who take medicine?**

The vaccine is safe for people with health conditions or who take medicine. It may not work as well if you have immune system or neurological problems. It also may not work as well if you take steroids or other drugs for inflammation.