**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 mean your body is getting immune. Very rarely, a person has an allergic reaction right after getting the vaccine. That is why patients must wait 15-30 minutes before leaving.

How can a safe vaccine be ready so quickly?

For three main reasons. First, because scientists have been studying coronaviruses for many years. Second, because of the severity of the pandemic, scientists all over the world worked together to find the vaccine. And third, the United States paid drug companies over $12 billion. This paid for all the steps to make the new drug.

Can the vaccine give me or my family COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines being used in the United States have whole, live viruses, so they can’t give you the disease. And because you won’t have the live virus, you can’t give it to your family.

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 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.

My risk from the vaccine is greater than my risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID.

The facts don’t agree. Millions of people in the United States have already gotten the vaccine. A very, very, very small number have had allergic reactions. None have died from it.

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.

I don’t need a vaccine because for most young/healthy people, COVID-19 isn't very serious.

Some young and healthy people get very sick with COVID-19 and even die from it. Others don’t know they have it. These people are the ones who spread COVID-19 the most.

I don’t need a vaccine. My immunity is already strong, I stay healthy with diet and exercise, or I use supplements or 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.

I always get sick from the flu shot, so vaccines are not good for me.

Vaccine side effects are signs that your body is getting immune.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine free for everyone?

No one has to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine. It’s free whether you have private insurance, Medicaid, or no insurance. To get the vaccine, you may be asked for your insurance information.

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

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

I want to have a baby, or I am 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. If you are pregnant or nursing, talk with your healthcare provider about what’s best for you and your baby.

Has the vaccine been tested on people like me?

Yes. 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. There were about 6000 people in both studies who were Black, 16,000 who were Latinx, and 3000 who were Asian. Almost half of the people in the Pfizer trial had a condition such as obesity, diabetes, or heart disease.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine 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. Talk with your healthcare provider about what is right for you.

Can I get COVID-19 even after getting the vaccine?

If you were infected right before you got the vaccine, you can still get COVID-19—and give it to other people.