

COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs

Does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

-Studies show the vaccines lower the chance of developing COVID-19 by up to 95%. These results have been consistent across age, sex, race, and ethnicity. It is not yet known how long the vaccine will protect you or whether a booster will be required in the future.

How does the vaccine work?

-The vaccine works by telling normal cells in the body to make a protein that is found on the surface of the coronavirus--the “spike” protein. Once this “spike” protein appears in your body, your body learns how to recognize it, and this helps to fight the virus in the future. Then, you are more likely able to fight off the virus without getting sick.

Which vaccine should I get?

-All three of the approved vaccines reduce the chances of having serious cases of COVID-19. Some may want the single-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for people 16 and older, and Moderna is approved for those 18 and older. Other than that, these vaccines are all very similar in their effectiveness and safety. People are encouraged to get whatever vaccine is available to them!

Do I have to get the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines?

-Yes, it takes two doses of those vaccines to produce the best results. Some protection may be shown 10-14 days after the first dose, but your strongest immunity only comes after the second dose.

I hear there are new strains of the virus, will the vaccine work on those?

-Early studies show the vaccines are effective against the new variants.

Is the vaccine safe?

-In short, yes. Millions of people have received the vaccine in the first few months, and there was no pattern of serious adverse events. Importantly, the vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 because it does not contain the active virus.

What are the side effects?

-Soreness at the injection site, fatigue, and headache are fairly common, but resolve within a couple of days. Some people also experience fever and chills.

What if I have allergies?

-As a safeguard, 15 minutes of monitoring after vaccine administration is standard to ensure there is no serious allergic reaction (seen in ~1/500,000 people).

What are the long-term effects?

-There is no data on long-term safety of the vaccine, but long-term side effects for any vaccine are very rare.

