

Taking care: Facts about the COVID-19 vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines are an important tool to help stop this pandemic. Sometimes, it can be difficult to tell what's fact from fiction these days.

Fact-based information from public health and medical experts can help you make the best choice for you and your loved ones. Here are some common myths out there and the facts about COVID-19 vaccines.

Myth 1: We can't trust COVID-19 vaccines because they were rushed.

Fact: The first vaccines for COVID-19 do involve new technology, and they were developed in record time. But it's not because there were shortcuts in the process. It was a direct result of:

- More rapid ways of doing clinical trials
- Social media helped companies recruit clinical research volunteers
- Collaboration between the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and vaccine makers
- FDA's use of a process called emergency use authorization(EUA)^{1,2}

All the COVID-19 vaccines have gone through rigorous studies to be sure they are safe. The CDC and FDA worked with two groups of independent vaccine safety experts. The experts reviewed the clinical trials data and advised their use. The CDC and FDA will closely monitor the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Myth 2: The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will alter my DNA.¹

Fact: No. The first COVID-19 vaccines to reach the market are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines teach cells in the body how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. Injecting mRNA into your body will not interact or change the DNA of your cells. Human cells break down and get rid of the mRNA soon after they have finished using the instructions.

Myth 3: I have recovered from COVID-19, so I don't need to get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available.^{1,2}

Fact: No. Even though it's not common, it is possible to get COVID-19 again. A vaccine should be offered to you . But, you should wait about 90 days after your COVID-19 diagnosis to get it.

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Myth 4: Taking the COVID-19 vaccine will give me COVID-19.³

Fact: No. None of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines now in development in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

There are several different types of vaccines in development. All of them teach our immune systems how to spot and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Myth 5: Once I get the vaccine, I won't have to wear a mask or worry about social distancing.

Fact: No. The vaccine may prevent you from getting sick, but you may still carry the virus and spread it. You should keep following guidelines to protect others who have not been vaccinated yet. It may take time for everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccination to get one.

Myth 6: COVID-19 vaccines can reduce fertility.

Fact: No. If you are considering pregnancy soon, accepting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you is a great way to ensure that you — and your future pregnancy — are protected.³

The COVID-19 vaccine is not believed to affect future fertility. The COVID-19 vaccine, like other vaccines, works by training our bodies to develop antibodies to fight against the virus that causes COVID-19, to prevent future illness. There is no evidence that the antibodies prevent pregnancy.

The current approved COVID-19 vaccines meet the high safety and efficacy standards and requirements as with a typical vaccine approval process. There are ongoing systems in place to monitor the vaccine's safety.⁴

Myth 7: COVID-19 vaccines causes severe side effects.

Fact: No. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Common side effects⁵ reported from clinical trials of approved vaccines include:

- Chills
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Pain where they got the shot

¹ Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

² Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

³ Wondering about COVID-19 vaccines if you're pregnant or breastfeeding? <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/wondering-about-covid-19-vaccines-if-youre-pregnant-or-breastfeeding-2021010721722>

⁴ Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19, <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19#:~:text=Further%2C%20ACOG%20recommends%20vaccination%20of,of%20the%20COVID%2D19%20vaccine.>

⁵ COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: Safety, Side Effects, Efficacy <https://www.webmd.com/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine/news/2021217/covid-19-vaccine-faq-safety-side-effects-efficacy#:~:text=The%20FDA%20says%20common%20side,and%20joint%20and%20muscle%20pain.>



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