

WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

WHAT DOES GETTING VACCINATED MEAN?

Vaccines prevent viruses or other germs from making you sick. They teach your immune system, the system that keeps you healthy, to attack germs before they can infect you. **When you were little you got vaccinated for many things** like the measles and whooping cough. The important thing is that these **vaccines protect you**. In the case of COVID-19 it means that you will either not get the virus or you will get the virus but will be protected from getting seriously ill. This is really important as the new “variants”, which are new types of the virus, are spreading. **The “Delta” variant is even easier to catch**, so it’s even more important to get vaccinated! But enough people have to get vaccinated for us to be able to lower the amount of virus that is in our communities so we can get back to normal.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GETTING VACCINATED?

The biggest benefit of getting the COVID-19 vaccination is **you will be protected from getting the virus or getting seriously ill!** This virus has killed over 600,000 people in the United States and getting vaccinated is the one way to make sure you are safe. This is even more important now that the **Delta variant** is spreading. **It has already infected many people who were not vaccinated and is causing serious illness and death.**

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO GET VACCINATED?

Long-term risks of getting the COVID-19 vaccine have not been reported so far. The vaccines have been tested and given an “emergency use” approval from the government so that the vaccines could get to us quickly. **More than 100 million Americans have already been vaccinated.** Most people will have some side effects, like a sore arm, feeling tired, or having body aches. These are **NORMAL**. They are just the body’s way of learning how to recognize the virus and develop a defense against it.

I’M NOT SURE I TRUST THAT THE VACCINES ARE SAFE.

Some people are concerned that the vaccines have been developed too quickly. But the vaccines are actually **based on a science that was developed years ago**. The companies that make them have also been given a lot of resources to create these vaccines so that they could be manufactured quickly.

There are a lot of resources for you to get more information about the COVID-19 vaccines. Talk to your doctor or someone you trust about medical information. If you go online, make sure you look at sources that have good information, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hospitals like Temple or UPenn, or PHILA.GOV/COVID

COVID-19 VACCINE frequently asked questions

VACCINE 101 - WHAT IS IT?:

There are three COVID-19 vaccines. Two (Pfizer and Moderna) use the RNA of the virus (its genes) to help your immune system recognize SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine **does NOT** change your own genes. The other (Johnson and Johnson) uses proteins of the virus to help your body recognize the virus. All three are very effective in either preventing you from getting the virus or getting seriously ill /dying from COVID-19. They are also all effective at protecting you from getting seriously ill or dying from the new “Delta variant”, a new type of COVID-19 virus that is even easier to catch than the original virus. **If you haven’t been vaccinated yet, now is the time to do it!**

IS IT SAFE?

Yes! The vaccines have been tested and have already been given safely to **over 100 MILLION Americans**. Severe reactions are rare but we will monitor you to make sure that you aren’t having a reaction to the shot.

WILL IT MAKE ME SICK?

No! The vaccines do not use live virus and **DO NOT** give you COVID-19. It does take the body a few weeks to build your defense so it is possible to get infected before that. That’s why it’s still important to wear a mask, be six feet from others, and wash your hands.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Even when you do something good for you like exercise, there are side effects like sore muscles. Most people who get the vaccine say they have a sore arm. You might also feel tired or have a headache. You may also have a slight fever or have somebody aches. This is **NORMAL**. It just means your immune system is working! And these will go away in a day or so.

WHAT IF I’VE ALREADY HAD COVID-19?

You should still get vaccinated! It’s possible to get COVID -19 again and get sick, so you want to get vaccinated to prevent that from happening.

SHOULD SOME PEOPLE NOT GET VACCINATED?

If you’ve had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines you might not want to get the COVID vaccine. Talk to your doctor about whether it’s right for you!

COVID-19 VACCINE MYTHS

WILL THE COVID-19 VACCINE ALTER MY DNA?

NO! The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use “messenger RNA” to teach our cells how to protect us from the virus that causes COVID-19. This is specific to the virus and **DOES NOT affect your DNA in any way.** The Johnson and Johnson vaccine uses inactive virus to teach your body how to fight off the virus that causes COVID-19. This will also not make you sick or alter your DNA.

IF I HAD COVID-19, DO I STILL NEED TO BE VACCINATED?

YES! We don’t know how long you are protected from COVID-19 after you have it, so it is possible to get it again. **It’s better to get vaccinated because this protection usually lasts longer than the immunity you have after being sick.**
NOTE: If you were treated with “monoclonal antibodies” or “convalescent plasma” when you had COVID-19, you should wait 90 days before you’re vaccinated. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you got or if you have other questions about getting vaccinated.

THE VACCINE WAS AVAILABLE QUICKLY. IS IT SAFE?

Some people are concerned that the vaccines have been developed too quickly. But **the vaccines are actually based on a science that was developed almost 20 years ago** to help respond to an outbreak, just like we are having now. This makes the process of making the vaccine quicker. The companies that make them have also been given a lot of resources to create these vaccines so that they could be manufactured quickly.

WILL I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 AFTER VACCINATION?

NO! None of the vaccines will cause you to test positive on a COVID-19 virus test. This test shows current infection. You might test positive on an antibody test because the vaccines help your body develop antibodies, which is what protects you from infection. This test just shows that you are actually protected from getting COVID-19.

IS IT SAFE IF I’M PREGNANT OR WANT TO GET PREGNANT?

Yes! There is no evidence that getting vaccinated is dangerous to women who are already pregnant, are breastfeeding, or who want to get pregnant. In fact, getting COVID-19 is dangerous to both the woman and her baby so getting vaccinated is the best protection. There is no reason not to get vaccinated. But if you are still concerned, talk with your doctor.

COVID-19 VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects are just things that might happen after doing something. Most of the time we think about them as bad or unpleasant when we take medicine. But side effects can also be something good or beneficial. If you think about it, we have side effects for many things. If we exercise, which is good for us, we may have good side effects like having more energy or sleeping better. But we may also have a bad side effect like having sore muscles the next day. In the case of vaccinations, **you may have some side effects as your body learns how to fight off the virus you are being vaccinated against, in this case the virus that causes COVID-19.**

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SIDE EFFECTS?

The side effects people report from the COVID-19 vaccine are similar to the side effects of any vaccination. The most common is a sore arm where you had the shot. Other common things include a low fever, having body aches or a headache, and some people will also feel really tired. Having any of these symptoms is **NORMAL.** It just means your immune system is working! And these will go away in a day or so.

IF I HAVE SIDE EFFECTS DOES IT MEAN I HAVE COVID-19?

No! The vaccines do not use live virus and **DO NOT** give you COVID-19. It does take the body a few weeks to build your defense so it is possible to get infected before that. That’s why it’s still important to wear a mask, be six feet from others, and wash your hands.

ARE THERE SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS?

Very rarely someone might have a severe allergic reaction to the vaccination. That’s why we keep you after the vaccination and monitor you for 15 minutes. If you do have a reaction, there are medical personnel here to help you. In the United States, very few of these serious side effects have been reported.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

If you have any side effects, **you can manage them** by taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). These can help ease pain or help with a fever. Also, be sure to get rest and drink water to stay hydrated. This can help your body recover quicker.