COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines alter your DNA?
A: COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. Both mRNA (Pfizer and Moderna) and viral vector (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept.
Learn more about mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines. (CDC)

Q: Can COVID-19 vaccines lower your fertility?
A: COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone 12 years of age or older, including people who are trying to get pregnant now or might become pregnant in the future, as well as their partners. Currently no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems (problems trying to get pregnant) in women or men. Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and people who would like to have a baby. (CDC)

Q: Will COVID-19 vaccines make me sick with COVID-19?
A: None of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines 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. COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19.

Q: Once I receive the vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19?
A: No, none of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines cause you to test positive on viral tests (PCR and antigen tests), which are used to see if you have a current infection.
If your body develops an immune response to vaccination, which is the goal, you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips?
A: COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips. Vaccines are developed to fight against disease and are not administered to track your movement. Vaccines work by stimulating your immune system to produce antibodies, exactly like it would if you were exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease, without having to get the disease first. A list of ingredients for the vaccines can be found here and in the references listed below.

Q: Researchers developed COVID-19 vaccines very quickly, are they are safe?
A: Yes! Studies found that the two initial vaccines are both about 95% effective — and reported no serious or life-threatening side effects. There are many reasons why the COVID-19 vaccines could be developed so quickly. Here are just a few:

- The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna were created with a method that has been in development for years, so the companies could start the vaccine development process early in the pandemic.
- The vaccine developers didn't skip any testing steps but conducted some of the steps on an overlapping schedule to gather data faster.

- Vaccine projects had plenty of resources, as governments invested in research and/or paid for vaccines in advance.
- Some types of COVID-19 vaccines were created using messenger RNA (mRNA), which allows a faster approach than the traditional way that vaccines are made.

Q: I've already had COVID-19, don't I have natural immunity?
A: Natural immunity after a positive diagnosis is only temporary, and you can get reinfected. Vaccination helps protect you even if you've already had COVID-19. There is also evidence that COVID-19 vaccines offer better protection than natural immunity alone. You are twice as likely to get infected again if you are unvaccinated than if you get vaccinated after having COVID-19.

Q: Even fully vaccinated people can get COVID-19, isn't getting the vaccine pointless?
A: While no vaccine is 100% effective, getting the vaccine will prevent you from getting severely ill, being hospitalized, or dying if you do get COVID-19. It also allows you to protect those in your life who cannot be vaccinated due to age or those who are at high-risk due to medical conditions.

Q: Are long-term side effects from the vaccines going to be worse than COVID-19?
A: The threat of COVID-19 is real and urgent, and the benefits of getting vaccinated far outweigh any risks. The risk of severe adverse events after any COVID-19 vaccination remains very low, and far lower than the risk of adverse health outcomes associated with contracting COVID-19.

Q: I've had COVID-19 – when should I get vaccinated?
A: People who have had COVID-19 should wait until they have recovered from their illness and have completed isolation before getting vaccinated. If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Can I get an antibody test to prove that I am immune to COVID-19 and do not need a vaccine?
A: Antibody testing is not currently recommended to determine if you are immune to COVID-19 or to decide whether someone needs to be vaccinated. We are still learning to what degree and for how long individuals with antibodies have immunity and what concentration of antibodies may be needed to provide such protection.

Q: If one dose of vaccine provides some protection, why should I get the second dose?
A: You must get both doses of a two-dose vaccine (currently Pfizer and Moderna) to achieve full protection. The first dose helps your body create an immune response while the second dose strengthens and prolongs your immunity. While only getting one dose provides some protection, your risk of getting COVID-19 and your risk of serious illness and hospitalization as a result of COVID-19 is higher if you don't get both doses. Getting both doses also helps protect your family and friends and gets us closer to herd immunity.

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