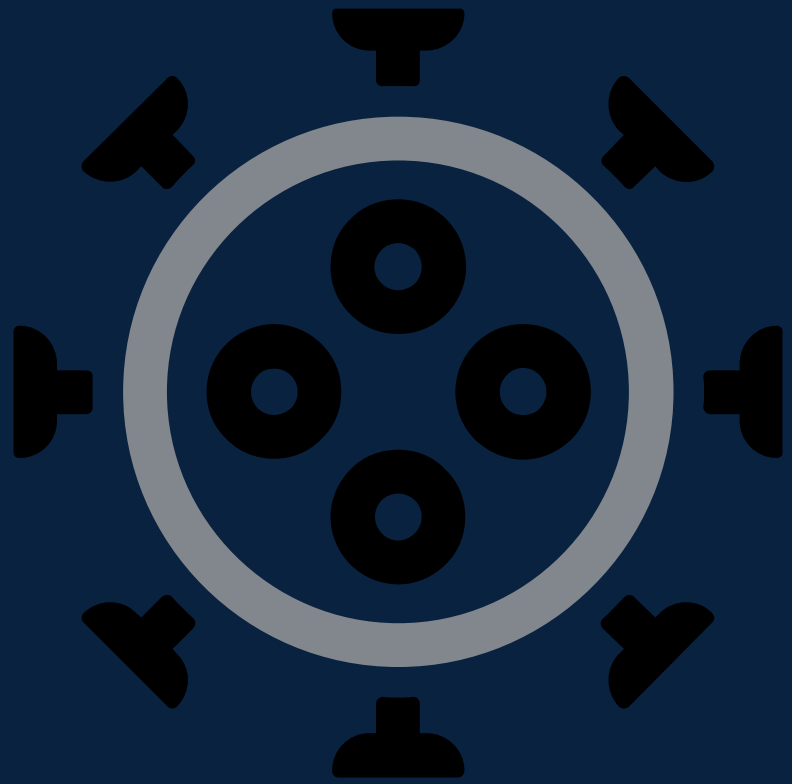
COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs



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References

1. CDC Explaining mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

2. CDC Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

3. CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States

4. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19

5. CDC Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination

6. CDC Understanding side effects and adverse events

7. WHO Vaccines and immunization: What is vaccination?

8. NJM Preliminary Findings of mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine Safety in Pregnant Persons

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Was the development of the COVID-19 vaccines rushed?
The science used in the development of both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccines has been around for a decade. It was previously used to develop vaccines against Zika, CMV, influenza and rabies, all of which went through human trials and were found to be safe (CDC1).

Were any shortcuts taken in developing the COVID-19 vaccines?
Both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccines went through the same rigorous safety procedures as *all* FDA approved vaccines. There were *no shortcuts*! More than 70,000 individuals safely participated in the trials before Moderna and Pfizer received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Will mRNA somehow rearrange my DNA?
mRNA is injected into your muscle, usually the upper arm, and enters into the cytoplasm (the water part) of your muscle cells, where it triggers your body to produce protective antibodies to the COVID-19 “spike protein.” It does not (and cannot) enter into the nucleus, where our DNA is housed (CDC1).

When should I not receive the COID-19 vaccines?
If you have a contraindication to the available vaccine, you should delay being vaccinated at this time and talk with your provider.

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Do the COVID-19 vaccines induce sterility in women?
Infertility is not identified as an adverse outcome in any of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine trials performed to date (CDC2).

ACOG recommends vaccination of individuals who are actively trying to become pregnant or are contemplating pregnancy and meet the criteria for vaccination based on ACIP prioritization recommendations. Additionally, it is not necessary to delay pregnancy after completing both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (ACOG).

There is no evidence that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines cause an increased risk of infertility. Concerns related to "the spike protein" found in popular media have not been established in research (CDC1).

Could the COVID-19 vaccines be harmful for my unborn child?
Pregnant women are not usually included in initial trials for vaccines or medications including the COVID-19 vaccines. However, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have now been studied in tens of thousands of pregnant women and no increase in adverse outcomes has been identified (NJM). Pregnant women are at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 including respiratory failure, need for mechanical ventilation (or ECMO), and death. There may also be an increased incidence of adverse outcomes of pregnancy, including preterm births and stillbirths (CDC2).

Women are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider if they are pregnant or are considering pregnancy. Pregnant women routinely and safely receive vaccines that are not live viruses (e.g. annual flu and Tdap). The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines.

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Are there any side effects to the COVID-19 vaccines?
Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects. Usually vaccine side effects are minor (for example, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, a sore arm where a shot was given or a low-grade fever after a vaccine) and go away on their own within a few days. If your side effects worsen or do not go away in a couple of days, notify your provider. If you have a medical condition that may affect your decision, please have a discussion with your healthcare provider to assure you make the most effective and safe decision.

Why should I get vaccinated?
Two key reasons to get vaccinated are to ***protect ourselves*** and to ***protect those around us***. Because not everyone can be vaccinated — including very young babies, those who are seriously ill or have certain allergies — they depend on others being vaccinated to ensure they are also safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Why is a COVID-19 vaccine needed if we can do other things, such as social distancing and wearing a mask, to prevent catching the disease?
Stopping a pandemic requires using all available tools. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask and staying at least six feet away from others, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

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Will I need to keep wearing a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have received two doses of the vaccine?
While the vaccine greatly decreases the risk that you will get seriously ill from COVID-19, it can still on rare cases lead to a mild case of infection. In those cases, it may still be possible to transmit the disease to others. Therefore, the CDC still recommends masking in public indoor settings.

Are there other vaccines that help prevent me from getting COVID-19?
There are currently no available vaccines that will prevent COVID-19. A flu vaccine will not protect you from getting COVID-19, but it can prevent you from getting influenza (flu) at the same time as COVID-19. This can keep you from having a more severe illness.

Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from the COVID-19 vaccines?
The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Since this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Some early evidence — based on some studies — seems to suggest that natural immunity may not last very long. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about.

What if I have other questions or doubts?
If you have any concerns, speak with your provider.

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