



## COVID-19 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?

The vaccine is strongly recommended. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness. By getting vaccinated, you can also help protect people around you.

### 2. Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use or in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it is possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.

### 3. If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can catch it more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last.

### 4. How was the COVID-19 vaccine developed, tested and approved?

The COVID-19 vaccine was developed and tested in multiple phases as required for all vaccines. Tens of thousands of people were given the vaccine during the tests, and effectiveness and safety was monitored for eight weeks. Before approving a vaccine, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) independently and rigorously analyzes data from the clinical trial. Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) is not granted until this independent analysis is completed.

### 5. Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.

### 6. Is it better to get natural immunity to COVID-19 rather than immunity from a vaccine?

No. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection lasts. Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have debilitating symptoms that persist for months.

### 7. How do I know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?

All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA will keep monitoring the vaccines to look for safety issues after they are authorized and in use.

Safety is the most important requirement of the vaccine, and data from the clinical trials is assessed by independent experts on at least two important committees: the Vaccines and Related Biologics Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The FDA requires eight weeks of safety data on the vaccine. To date, from 30,000 to 50,000 individuals have been monitored for more than eight weeks after receiving the vaccine, and no serious side effects have been documented.

## **8. How was the COVID-19 vaccine created so quickly, and can we trust it?**

While COVID-19 vaccine development was called "Operation Warp Speed," drug makers maintained all established quality and safety requirements required of all other vaccine and drug approvals. There are several reasons why the development of the vaccine occurred so quickly:

- Early publication of the genomic sequence (based on SARS-I virus)
- Use of messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine technology, which is faster than using live or killed virus particles
- Known mRNA vaccine technology as it is the same technology used for the influenza vaccine
- Fast recruitment of vaccine trial subjects
- Unprecedented global funding resources & speed of regulatory approvals

## **9. What type of COVID-19 vaccine will be approved?**

The new COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA technology. According to ACIP, there have previously been no licensed mRNA vaccines in the United States; however, researchers have been studying and working with mRNA technology for the last decade. Interest has grown in these vaccines because they can be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials. This means the process can be standardized and scaled up, making vaccine development faster than traditional methods of making vaccines. Vaccines developed with mRNA technology work by giving our cells instructions for making a harmless protein that is unique to the virus. Our body recognizes that the protein should not be there and builds antibodies to fight the virus.

## **10. Do the COVID-19 vaccines contain live or killed viral particles?**

No. None of the approved or proposed vaccines contain live or killed viral particles.

## **11. What are the side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Clinical trial participants experienced side effects, such as pain or swelling at the injection site, headache, body aches, low-grade fever, fatigue, muscle pain or joint. Symptoms typically resolved within 24-72 hours after the vaccination. Some participants reported that side effects were more pronounced after the second dose. In general, COVID-19 vaccine side effects have been described as more noticeable than side effects from the flu vaccine but less pronounced than side effects from the shingles vaccine.

## **12. Are there long-term side effects from COVID-19 vaccine?**

Because all COVID-19 vaccines are new, it will take more time and more people getting vaccinated to learn about very rare or possible long-term side effects. The good news is, at least 8 weeks' worth of safety data were gathered in the clinical trials for all the authorized vaccines, and it's unusual for vaccine side effects to appear more than 8 weeks after vaccination.

**13. If I experience side effects after receiving the vaccine, does it mean the vaccine gave me COVID-19?**

No. The presence of side effects does not mean the vaccine gave you COVID-19. In fact, mRNA vaccines cannot give someone COVID-19 because the vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. Any side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do—working and building up protection against disease. In other words, if you feel some discomfort, this means the vaccine is doing its job.

**14. Were older adults included in the testing of the COVID-19 vaccine, and are there any unique side effects for seniors from the vaccine?**

Yes, older adults were included in all clinical trials, and the vaccine was found to be effective for this population as well. Older adults were also found to have decreased and less-pronounced side effects associated with the vaccine compared with other populations.

**15. Is it true that you need two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. Current COVID-19 vaccines require two shots between 21 and 28 days apart. The first shot starts building protection, and the second shot serves as a "booster" to maximize immunity and protection against the virus. You should make every effort to receive your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose as scheduled. However, if you miss your scheduled appointment, you should schedule your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose as soon as possible. You do not need to repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> dose.

**16. Isn't it better to get immunity from having COVID-19 than it is to get immunity from a vaccine?**

No. While a COVID-19 infection may confer immunity for a few months, it also carries the risk of causing serious illness and of spreading the virus to others. A COVID-19 vaccination gives you immunity without the risk of being actively infected and developing serious illness.

**17. Why aren't handwashing, social distancing and facemasks enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19?**

Although safeguards, such as washing hands and using hand sanitizer, maintaining social distance and wearing facemasks, help reduce your chances of being exposed or of spreading the virus to others, the only way to truly stop this pandemic is through widespread vaccination. Even when people are as safe as possible, the virus can still spread rapidly and lead to serious illness in large groups of people. Like infectious outbreaks of the past, such as smallpox, measles and pertussis, widespread vaccination is the most effective tool to stop the COVID-19 pandemic.

**18. Do we still need to wear facemasks if we get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. Even if you are vaccinated, some people around you may not be. We know the vaccine prevents disease in the vaccinated person, but it still may be possible to transmit the disease to others.

**19. When can we be "free" from COVID-19 again?**

This is unknown. Experts hope that when at least 70 percent of the population is vaccinated, "herd immunity" will occur. Herd immunity, also known as "population immunity," occurs when a large portion of the population becomes immune to the disease, making the spread of the virus from person to person unlikely. Government healthcare leaders expect to have enough vaccine doses to vaccinate 70 percent of the U.S. population by May 2021. Therefore, it is possible that we may return to some semblance of pre-COVID life during the summer of 2021.

**20. What happens if some people get the vaccine and others do not?**

The vaccine will be most effective in the general population if the majority of people receive it. While clinical trials analyzed effectiveness of the vaccine, they did not review infectiousness and if the vaccine protects from virus spread. Therefore, it is possible that vaccinated individuals may still spread the virus, making unvaccinated individuals at risk of developing serious disease.

**21. Does the vaccine hurt?**

The COVID-19 vaccine is administered in a similar manner to the flu shot. You may experience mild pain and soreness at the injection site; otherwise, the shot should be painless.

**22. If someone has COVID-19 and doesn't know they have it, what happens if they get a vaccination at the same time?**

It is considered safe to get the vaccine even if you have or recently had COVID-19 infection. The vaccine will increase your protection even more from future COVID-19 infections.

**23. If I have an acute COVID-19 infection, should I receive the vaccine?**

To reduce the risk of virus spread, it is recommended that only individuals who are considered "recovered" and out of the quarantine or isolation period receive the vaccine. Natural immunity after COVID-19 infection lasts ~3 months. Therefore, individuals who have had a recent COVID-19 infection may choose to be vaccinated 2-3 months after recovery. However, it is considered safe to receive the vaccine earlier.

**24. There were severe allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine in Europe. Should I worry about this?**

There were only 2 individuals out of thousands of vaccine recipients who developed an allergic reaction to the vaccine. Both individuals carried a history of severe allergies and all allergic symptoms resolved with medical treatment. If you have a history of severe allergies or anaphylaxis to medications, you should consult with your physician regarding COVID-19 vaccine appropriateness. However, if you do not have history of allergies or anaphylaxis, the chance of an allergic reaction is rare.

**25. Is the vaccine appropriate for pregnant or lactating women?**

Per the CDC, the vaccine is considered safe for both pregnant and lactating women. However, this subgroup population was not included in clinical trials, therefore it is recommended you consult with your physician for guidance.

**26. Is the vaccine safe for individuals who are immunosuppressed?**

Per the CDC, the vaccine is considered safe for individuals who are immunosuppressed. However, it is recommended you consult with your physician for guidance.

**27. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe to administer with other vaccines?**

Due to lack of safety data, currently the CDC does not recommend concurrent administration of other vaccines (i.e. flu, shingles, pneumonia) with the COVID-19 vaccines. Other vaccines must be given at least 14 days before 1<sup>st</sup> dose or 14 after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

**28. May I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I have received COVID-19 antibody treatment (i.e. Remdesivir)?**

Per the CDC, it is recommended that the COVID-19 vaccine is given at least 90 days after last antibody treatment.

**29. Will Tapestry residents and associates be offered the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. Allocation and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is regulated and decided by state health agencies.

**30. Will the COVID-19 vaccine be covered by Medicare and other payors?**

Yes, the vaccine will be free of cost, the government has purchased all vaccine doses that are available for distribution. There is a small administration fee associated with each vaccine dose, which will be covered by Medicare and commercial insurance.

**31. What if I do not have insurance, will I be covered?**

Yes, Walgreens will submit a reimbursement claim to the Provider Relief Fund. This fund is handled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which will then reimburse the healthcare providers.

**32. How do I report problems or bad reactions after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Notify your physician or medical healthcare provider and us so we may assist you. We are also encouraging all recipients who receive the vaccine to enroll in “v-safe”. This is a smartphone tool you can use to tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. If you report serious side effects, someone from CDC will call to follow up. I will give you instructions for how to enroll.

**33. Is COVID-19 dangerous for the elderly? How are the symptoms for the elderly different?**

COVID-19 infection is significantly more dangerous for the elderly. While nursing home COVID-19 cases represent just 2% of total cases in the nation, COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes represent a staggering 40% of total COVID-19 deaths. In the elderly, while some individuals remain asymptomatic while infected, many develop respiratory failure and failure to thrive.