

COVID-19 Vaccine

Myths, Facts & FAQs

Trust the Facts #VaxUp

Myth #1

The COVID-19 vaccines are not effective because thousands of people who've been vaccinated have still tested positive for the virus.

FACT:

- The COVID-19 vaccines are not 100% effective. Being vaccinated does not eliminate all risk of getting COVID-19.
- The vaccine will GREATLY reduce the risk of getting COVID-19, and if you do still get the disease, you will likely have a mild case and experience far fewer symptoms.

Myth #2

I don't need the vaccine. I'm healthy/young/have a strong immune system, or I have already had COVID-19 and was asymptomatic or only had mild symptoms.

FACT:

- People who have had COVID-19 should still receive the vaccine and there is growing evidence that the vaccines provide lasting protection, especially for those who have had COVID-19 AND have received the vaccine.
- If you are not vaccinated but everyone else around you is, you are now the one with the weaker immune system.
- Natural immunity from COVID-19 does not last long. You can get COVID-19 disease more than once if you do not receive the vaccine.

Myth #3

The COVID-19 Vaccine will cause infertility or could harm my baby. I shouldn't get the vaccine if I am pregnant, breastfeeding, or want to become pregnant.

FACT:

- The COVID-19 vaccine has no negative effect on fertility. It actually can help your baby even more by offering immunity protection to your child if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Pregnant people are at higher risk for getting severely ill with COVID-19 and delivering a baby prematurely. A COVID-19 vaccine can help protect you and your child.

Myth #4

I shouldn't get the vaccine because of ethical or religious concerns about stem cells in the vaccines.

FACT:

- None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain stem cells.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine does contain cells from a fetal cell line, which is not the same thing as a stem cell.
- The Pope has been given the vaccine and the Vatican has deemed it "morally acceptable" for Catholics to receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Myth #5

I don't trust the COVID-19 vaccine because of past racism in healthcare, like the Tuskegee research study.

FACT:

- Some community members have historically-rooted reasons for not trusting in healthcare and/or government. For example, the Tuskegee research study (1932-1972), where hundreds of Black men were studied on the long-term progression of syphilis. The men were lied to and never given adequate health care. This may bring up concerns about mistrust or medical racism in healthcare.

- The COVID-19 vaccine is not related to a larger medical study in any way, and the vaccine is a safe vaccine for all races and ethnicities. In fact, a Black female scientist named Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett led the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for Moderna and is committed to sharing information on vaccine safety and its effectiveness in communities of color.
- Some of the descendants of Tuskegee study participants have even joined together in video PSA ads to encourage the Black community to get the COVID-19 vaccine, seek out factual information to address their questions, and to make an informed decision for their own health.

Myth #6 Vaccine development was rushed. Therefore, it is not safe.

FACT:

- These vaccines were developed faster than any other vaccine in history thanks to a new and faster way to create vaccines – messenger RNA (mRNA) – all without cutting corners or compromising safety.
- Vaccine manufacturers across the globe helped speed up the time it takes to create a vaccine and conduct clinical trials by all focusing solely on the COVID-19 vaccine and working together (instead of as competitors).
- No corners were cut in the making of these vaccines, only red tape was cut to speed up the time in which it takes to get a safe and effective vaccine available to the public.

Myth #7 The vaccines are not safe because they do not have full FDA approval.

FACT:

- All three vaccines in use today in the United States have been proven to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is why they have been granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).
- An Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) means there is sufficient safety data from clinical trials to know the benefits of the vaccines outweigh the known and potential risks. Just because the vaccines aren't fully approved by the FDA, does not mean they have not closely reviewed the safety and efficacy of the vaccines and believe they are.
- Typically, it takes years for the FDA to fully approve a product. Both Pfizer and Moderna have applied for full FDA approval.

Myth #8 The vaccine will give me COVID-19.

FACT:

- Nobody is getting infected from the COVID-19 vaccine. None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
- It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

Myth #9 The COVID-19 vaccines don't work on the variants, so I don't have to bother getting one.

FACT:

- The COVID-19 vaccines are proving to offer great protection against variant strains of COVID-19. The Delta variant now makes up more than half of new COVID-19 cases (spreading in unvaccinated people) – and the current COVID-19 vaccines will protect you from that!
- Variants are created when older strains are no longer able to survive due to a lack of suitable hosts. The virus mutates to increase its chances of finding new hosts. That is why variants are usually more contagious than previous strains and can cause new and more severe symptoms. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine helps prevent new variants from forming.



Myth #10

My child doesn't need a vaccine because children don't get severely ill from COVID-19.

FACT:

- The newest variant (Delta variant) is having larger impact on children and young adults with increased hospitalizations in that age group. Getting children/young people vaccinated is more and more important.
- Even though it is less common, many young children have developed severe illness from COVID-19 resulting in hospitalization and even death. Don't risk your child's health when multiple vaccines that have proven to be safe are available for you and your children.

Myth #11

I will have a bad reaction or experience severe side effects as a result of the vaccine.

FACT:

- Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely unlikely following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination.
- Short term side effects following a COVID-19 vaccination are typically mild symptoms including muscle pain at the injection site, fever, headache, fatigue. These symptoms usually go away within 1-2 days and are a sign that your immune system is working.
- As far as long term side effects, vaccine monitoring has historically shown that side effects generally happen within six weeks of receiving a vaccine dose. For this reason, the FDA required each of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines to be studied for at least two months (eight weeks) after the final dose. Millions of people have received COVID-19 vaccines and no long-term side effects have been detected.

Myth #12

Virginia has already reached 70% vaccination and North Carolina has reached 59%. I don't need a vaccine because I'm protected by others who already got it.

FACT:

- Virginia and North Carolina's vaccination rates as a whole do not reflect the true vaccination rate of specific communities. Those numbers are not the same for children who are too young to receive the vaccine, many communities of color, or specific regions.
- In Black and Hispanic communities in Virginia and North Carolina, the vaccination rate is drastically lower. Black and Hispanic communities and other underrepresented communities are impacted disproportionately by COVID-19, so we need the vaccination rate in these communities to go up to ensure everyone is protected.
- By getting the vaccine, you are helping protect your community, as well as others who cannot receive the vaccine for medical reasons or because it has not yet been approved for them (for example, children under 12). You also help stop the spread and appearance of new variants that are more contagious and cause more severe symptoms, including in younger people.

Myth #13

I don't have anyone to talk to who can answer my questions/concerns about the vaccine.

FACT:

- According to a national online survey, doctors or healthcare providers are the No. 1 trusted source when it comes to information about the vaccine. If you have any questions, please contact your doctor to talk about your own medical history and if the vaccine is right for you. If you do not have a doctor, you can message Sentara Healthcare on Instagram with your questions/concerns (@SentaraHealth).

Fast Facts

- **Vegans and vegetarians can safely receive the COVID-19 vaccine** while still observing their preferred animal guidelines. The vaccines are PETA-approved and do not contain any animal products.
- **The vaccines do not contain any trace of a microchip.** This myth is based on a fake video that was circulating on the internet. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips or tracking information. The active ingredient in the current COVID-19 vaccines is mRNA. The vaccines also contain a few other ingredients like fats, sugar, and salts, which are used to make and transport the vaccine. These ingredients have been used safely for a long time in other treatments and vaccines.
- **The COVID-19 vaccine will NOT cause you to be magnetic.** There are no ingredients that can produce any kind of electromagnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metal.
- **You need to receive BOTH doses of a two-dose vaccine series in order to receive full immunity protection.**
- **The COVID-19 vaccine will not alter your DNA.** The mRNA in the COVID-19 vaccines does not interact with your DNA. In fact, the mRNA never even enters the part of the cell where your DNA is located. Messenger RNA is also broken down in your cell after it is used. It does not stay in your cells or become a permanent part of your body in any way.
- **COVID-19 vaccines were tested (and proven effective) in diverse groups of people across all age, gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds.** About 30% of U.S. participants were Hispanic, Black, Asian, or Native American, and about half were older adults. There were no significant safety concerns identified in these or any other groups.



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These facts were compiled and reviewed by Sentara Healthcare clinical experts using trusted medical sources including New England Journal of Medicine, Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, CDC, and others.

