

# VAX FAQ'S

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### Why should I get vaccinated?

So you don't get sick with COVID-19! Right now, 97% of people who are having to be hospitalized and who are dying haven't been vaccinated. The vaccines are safe and over 90% effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death. The vaccine arms you with what you need to fight the virus, so that even if you still were to get it (rare, but possible) the infection would likely be mild or without symptoms at all. Since the vaccine helps keep you from getting COVID-19, it also helps keep you from spreading it your friends and family members especially if they haven't been vaccinated yet.

### Will the vaccine put a chip in me or change my DNA?

No, the vaccine won't do either one of those things. The vaccines simply contain instructions teaching your immune system to recognize the virus and how to build antibodies and immune cells to fight it if you encounter it. Sort of like outfitting an army with weapons ahead of time so it has a head start against the enemy. It can't change your DNA since the vaccine never enters the cell nucleus, where your DNA is located.

### What are the most common side effects?

Most teens experience the same things as adults- your arm will probably be sore for a couple of days, and you may run a low fever, have some body aches or nausea, or feel tired. These are actually good signs because they mean your body's immune system is revving up, prepping to fight the virus. These feelings generally go away within 2 or 3 days. Just rest and drink lots of fluids. Some people don't feel any side effects at all! That doesn't mean that their vaccine didn't work - everybody's system is just different.

### Does the vaccine increase the risk of infertility?

No, there is no scientific evidence linking the COVID-19 vaccines to any problems with fertility in either males or females. During the clinical trials when they were first testing the vaccines, there were female volunteers who actually became pregnant with no ill effects to the women or to their infants.

### Does the vaccine cause the inflammatory heart condition called myocarditis?

It is true that in very rare instances (like 13 out of every 1 million shots), there have been cases in which people under 40, mostly young men, did get temporary heart inflammation (myocarditis). The good news is that this has been a short term issue that gets better in a few days with rest and care. To put this into perspective, the potential risks to your heart (and to the rest of your body) from COVID-19 are far greater, and might not be temporary.

### If vaccinated people can still get COVID-19, why should I get the vaccine?

Because no vaccine for anything works 100% of the time (the COVID-19 vaccines are close, at generally 90%), there will always be cases in which the vaccine doesn't work for someone and they get what is called a "breakthrough infection." Scientific evidence is showing however that fully vaccinated people who get a breakthrough infection with COVID-19 are having much milder illness (if they experience any symptoms at all), and are avoiding hospitalization and death from the virus.

### If I am vaccinated and get exposed to COVID, do I have to quarantine?

If you're fully vaccinated and you don't have symptoms, you don't have to quarantine, although it is recommended that you get a COVID-19 test after getting exposed to someone who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19. Keep an eye out for symptoms just in case, and keep wearing a mask in indoor public spaces for 14 days or until you get a negative COVID-19 test.

### Everyone says the shots were developed too fast, why should I trust them?

Due to the seriousness of the global pandemic, vaccine manufacturers and the scientific community worldwide dropped everything to urgently work on developing vaccines. The worldwide effort, time and money spent meant a lot got done very quickly. During this entire process however, no safety guidelines were skipped- the vaccine manufacturers still had to prove to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that the vaccines were safe, that they worked, and that their benefits outweighed any potential risks. Scientists had already been working on the technology used for the mRNA vaccines before the pandemic, so having that piece of the puzzle in place saved additional time.

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## CONTINUED

### **Why are people that have been vaccinated having to wear masks again?**

The primary reason is the Delta variant. With the previous strains (variants) of the virus, once people were vaccinated, there was little worry that they could spread the virus. The Delta variant changed all of this, because it behaves very differently from previous variants. New evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who happen to get a breakthrough infection can still spread the virus to others. As the science and our understanding of the virus evolves, the guidelines to keep people safe evolve too, which is why everybody is now encouraged to wear masks in indoor public spaces.

### **Only individuals with pre-existing conditions or older people get sick and die from COVID-19.**

#### **Why should I take the vaccine if it doesn't affect my age group?**

In the earlier stages of the pandemic, it was true that the majority of those being sickened and killed by the virus were older individuals. While it's generally true that the younger and healthier you are, the less likely you are to get severely ill or die from COVID-19, increasing numbers of children and teens are getting seriously ill and dying from the virus. Some young people are getting post-COVID conditions causing extreme fatigue, and trouble breathing lasting for weeks or months after recovering from the virus. Plus, even if you manage to avoid serious symptoms from the virus, you are still contagious, and could spread the virus to your family members or your best friends. Getting vaccinated not only protects you, it protects everyone around you.

### **I don't like to admit this, but I'm afraid of needles and don't like getting shots.**

Don't feel bad about this- you're not alone, and many adults have this same fear. There are different strategies you can use to help, like bringing along a trusted friend or family member to distract you, taking slow, deep breaths or bringing your phone to listen to music or watch videos or play a game. Telling the person giving you the vaccine that you're nervous can really help too- you won't be the first person who has said this, and they're trained to help people relax in these situations.

### **How is the Delta variant different from the original COVID-19 virus?**

The Delta variant is different from the original virus in a number of worrisome ways. It spreads much more easily because it makes many more copies of itself (replicates) inside the body of an infected person much more rapidly and sooner in the course of the infection. This makes it almost twice as contagious as the original virus. Some data suggest it may cause more severe illness in unvaccinated people. Fully vaccinated people with Delta variant breakthrough infections can spread the virus to others. This was less of a concern with earlier variants of the virus.

### **My parents decided to wait and see about the vaccine. I don't agree- what can I say to my parents about the safety of the vaccine?**

Your parents just want what's best for you. You can show them this information sheet, and tell them that the vaccines are free, safe, and very effective at preventing illness, hospitalization and death from the virus. No safety standards were skipped and no shortcuts taken in vaccine development. They won't give you COVID-19, put a microchip in you, or cause later infertility problems. You can remind them that the new Delta variant is sickening and hospitalizing increasing numbers of unvaccinated younger people and some are dying. Doctors don't yet understand the full short and long-term effects of this virus on teens and children.

### **I have heard that taking the vaccine causes people to have more problems than it would to have COVID-19. I have friends who got COVID and had few or no symptoms. I know others who took the vaccine and got really sick.**

Most people who get vaccinated experience only mild symptoms lasting only 2-3 days at most, and some report no side effects from the vaccine at all. Any side effects that you might experience from the vaccine are temporary, while the effects from the virus may be severe and long-lasting. The vaccine can't give you the virus. It is possible that some people who report that the vaccine made them very sick actually caught COVID-19 before their vaccine had a chance to work. It takes 2 weeks after the second shot of a 2-dose series for your body to build full protection against COVID-19, so you have to be very careful during that time to take all precautions and not get exposed.