

# COVID-19 VACCINES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated December 16, 2020

## **Q: Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

**A:** No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

## **Q: Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe since it was developed so quickly?**

**A:** Yes. Vaccine safety is a priority. Although the development and production of this vaccine was sped up due to the nature and severity of this virus, no short cuts were taken nor was safety compromised during this process. Early results from trials show the COVID-19 vaccine has worked as it is supposed to with no serious side effects.

## **Q: How effective is the vaccine?**

**A:** The vaccine is the most effective tool in combating COVID-19 and prevents people from developing serious illness. Moderna's vaccine trials have shown about a 95 percent success in protecting people from the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

## **Q: What's the difference between the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines? Are they the same?**

**A:** The two vaccines are very similar. They both are 95% effective in preventing COVID disease and 100% effective in preventing severe disease. They both require two doses, have similar side effects and neither contain any live virus. The major difference is that the Pfizer vaccine needs to be stored at much lower temperatures.

## **Q: I'm healthy. Why do I need to be vaccinated?**

**A:** While you may be healthy, many individuals in our community have risk factors for getting serious complications from COVID-19 infection. Getting a COVID-19 vaccination protects you so you may protect others around you as well.

## **Q: Once I receive the vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask and social distance?**

**A:** Yes. The vaccine is the most effective tool in combating COVID-19 and prevents people from developing serious illness. We will still need to wear masks and practice physical distancing until a large portion of the population is vaccinated.

## **Q: How quickly will I be protected from the virus if I get the vaccine?**

**A:** It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity 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 get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

## **Q: I already had COVID-19, should I still get the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes, the CDC and NYSDOH are recommending vaccinations for individuals previously infected with SARS-COV2. Because we do not know how long the immunity lasts after the infection, you are not considered immune after infection. However, because reinfection in the first 90 days after initial infection is uncommon, you may choose to defer the vaccine until after this 90-day period.

## **Q: Will I need to get vaccinated for COVID-19 every year, like the flu?**

**A:** The long term effectiveness still needs to be answered because the data is so new on the vaccines. We'll need to wait and see if it's an annual vaccination or once every few years.

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## **Q: Is the vaccine safe for people with allergies?**

**A:** The Pfizer vaccine is safe for people with allergies to foods, oral medications, pets, latex, etc. It is also considered safe for people who have a history of severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to other vaccines or injectable medicines but out of caution they should be observed for 30 minutes. Only severe allergic reaction to one of the components of the Pfizer vaccine is considered a contraindication to vaccination. We are awaiting approval and guidance on the Moderna vaccine but expect it to be the same.

## **Q: Can I have the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

**A:** There is no data on the effects of the vaccine on pregnancy yet, but there is a risk to severe illness and adverse pregnancy outcomes with COVID infections. The decision should be discussed with your doctor and consider the personal, occupational and community risk of infection.

## **Q: How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?**

**A:** Individuals need two (2) doses of the vaccine to be effective. The second dose must be of the same vaccine. They cannot be interchanged. If you receive a first dose of the Moderna vaccine, your second dose must be the Moderna vaccine.

## **Q: If I receive my first dose at Cornerstone, can I receive my second dose somewhere else?**

**A:** By order of the CDC and NYSDOH, both doses need to be administered at the same site your first vaccine was given, regardless of the availability of vaccine elsewhere.

## **Q: Are there special considerations on who will receive the COVID-19 first?**

**A:** There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the US, but supply will increase in the weeks and months to come. Right now, CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccine be offered to healthcare personnel and those who are at highest risk of contracting and transmitting the virus. We will receive a matrix to help us determine who gets it first.

## **Q: What are the side effects of the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

**A:** After COVID-19 vaccination, you may have some side effects – similar to those of any other vaccine. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection. Side effects may feel like the flu, including: • injection site pain • tiredness • headache • muscle pain • chills • joint pain • fever • injection site swelling • injection site redness • nausea • feeling unwell • swollen lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy).

## **Q: Will getting the vaccine give me positive COVID test?**

**A:** The vaccine will not give you a positive viral or antigen test (nose swab), but it may give you a positive antibody test.

## **Q: Can children be given the vaccine?**

**A:** The Moderna vaccine has included children in its clinical trials. We expect more information about results when the Moderna vaccine receives emergency use authorization from the FDA.

## **Q: Can I get the vaccine at the same time as my flu shot?**

**A:** No. It is recommended that no other vaccine is given 14 days before or after to make sure the COVID vaccine is effective.