

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How are COVID-19 vaccines made?

A: There are a number of vaccine platforms currently being developed against COVID-19. The two most common are messenger RNA (Pfizer, Moderna) and adenovirus-based (Johnson & Johnson, Oxford-AstraZeneca). These vaccines use our bodies' immune system and normal cellular processes to target a specific part of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Q: How effective are COVID-19 vaccines?

A: Very effective! Large scale trials with over 30,000 participants in each have shown currently available vaccines to be highly effective against developing symptomatic and severe COVID-19. The FDA-approved Pfizer and Moderna vaccines both reported over 94% efficacy, on par with our most effective vaccines to date.

Q: How safe are COVID-19 vaccines?

A: The COVID-19 vaccines are extremely safe. Although they were produced very quickly, safety monitoring was a top priority during the regulatory process and no unusual safety concerns were noted. Further, they were tested in a large and diverse population and millions of people are now receiving the vaccines each day.

Q: Can patients with HIV receive COVID-19 vaccines?

A: Yes, people with HIV were included in all of the vaccine trials and there were no unusual safety concerns.

Q: What common side effects occur from COVID-19 vaccines?

A: The most commonly reported side effects are pain at the injection site, muscle aches, fatigue, and fevers. It is important to know that these side effects are more common after receiving the second COVID-19 vaccine dose.

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Q: Can a COVID-19 vaccine give someone COVID-19?

A: No. These vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. They simply contain instructions for our bodies to make a part of the virus, which allows our immune systems to make antibodies which then prevent us from getting sick with COVID-19.

Q: Can mRNA vaccines interact with our DNA?

A: No.

- 1) mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept.
- 2) The cell breaks down and gets rid of the mRNA soon after it is finished using the instructions.

Q: Why do I need two shots?

A: Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the United States require two shots. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone has to come back a few weeks later for the second one to get the best and most durable protection the vaccine can offer.

Q: I've already had COVID-19, should I still get the vaccine?

A: Yes, it's not recommended to administer vaccine during acute infection, but can be given any time after recovery. Natural immunity lasts only ~90 days. Immunity from COVID-19 vaccines has been shown to last much longer.

Q: When can I get my COVID-19 vaccine, and where do I go if I still have questions?

A: If you are a Nebraska resident, register to be on the COVID-19 vaccine list at <https://vaccinate.ne.gov/> or by calling 833-998-2275. HIV status will not be disclosed (it is listed along with other conditions that result in a weakened immune system).