

## COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

### Answering Your Questions

#### **How do we really know if the COVID-19 vaccines are safe?**

COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offers protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions.

#### **Is the vaccine that helpful? I heard getting COVID-19 gives you better and longer immunity than the protection a vaccine can give. Can it actually make my illness worse if I do end up getting COVID-19?**

Both this disease and the vaccine are new. We don't know how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

#### **How much will the shot hurt? Can it cause you to get very sick?**

Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated. We will understand more about mild side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine before we start to use it. However, your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Some people report getting a headache or fever when getting a vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It is working and building up protection to disease.

#### **How do we know that these are safe when they are so new? Couldn't they cause problems that we don't know about yet? What about long-term problems?**

COVID-19 vaccines are being tested in large clinical trials to assess their safety. However, it does take time, and more people getting vaccinated before we learn about very rare or long-term side effects. That is why safety monitoring will continue. CDC has an independent group of experts that review all the safety data as it comes in and provides regular safety updates. If a issue is detected, immediate action will take place to determine if the issue is related to the COVID-19 vaccine and determine the best course of action.

#### **How many shots am I going to need?**

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 most protection the vaccine can offer.

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