

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Safety and Effectiveness

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns with either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. For extra safety, the CDC and the FDA are continuing to monitor the vaccines as they are being distributed.

It was produced so quickly, how can we be sure it's safe?

The vaccines went through all the normal steps that any vaccine goes through for approval. Clinical trials were able to move faster than they do for most vaccines because the federal government put billions of dollars into the effort.

How effective is the vaccine?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are very effective: among people who took the vaccines, there were 94 to 95 percent fewer cases of COVID-19 than among those who did not receive it.

What if I don't get the second shot within the recommended time?

You need both shots to get the full protection of the vaccine. The first shot will only give you limited protection. Even if you miss the deadline, you can still get the second shot.

Can I still spread the virus if I have received the vaccine?

We don't yet know whether people who have been vaccinated can still spread the virus to others who have not received the vaccine. That's why we all need to continue to wear masks, socially distance, and follow all the necessary public health protocols at work and elsewhere, even after being vaccinated.

SEIU-UHW encourages all healthcare workers to protect themselves with the COVID-19 vaccine. Tens of millions of people around the world have now been safely vaccinated. Many of us have valid questions and concerns about the vaccine. We will continue to provide any up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the vaccine.

Side Effects

Will the vaccine cause side effects?

Some people who get a COVID-19 vaccine will experience minor and temporary side effects, particularly following the second dose. People have reported pain at the injection site, fatigue, and occasional fever, headache, or aching muscles and joints. These side effects go away within 1-2 days.

Are there any long-term side effects?

No. At this point, there are no long-term safety issues or side effects seen from the vaccine. CDC scientists and medical professionals will continue reviewing vaccine safety and providing information to the public, and will take action if there are new safety concerns.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, you can't. There are no live virus particles in the vaccine.

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Should anyone avoid the vaccine?

What if I already had COVID-19? Do I still need to get the vaccine?

Yes. The vaccine has been shown to give longer protection against the virus than having contracted and recovered from COVID-19. Check with your doctor on how long you should wait to get the vaccine after recovering from COVID-19.

What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding my child?

Although we have limited information on pregnancy and the COVID-19 vaccine, there are no known risks of getting the vaccine while pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding. We do know that pregnant women have a higher risk of serious illness if they get COVID-19. If you have more questions, contact your physician.

What if I have diabetes?

Yes, it is safe. In fact, people with diabetes are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 so it is even more urgent that they get vaccinated.

What if I have severe allergies?

Allergies are only a problem if you are allergic to the contents of the vaccine. Consult with your primary care doctor if you have concerns or have had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine in the past.

What about any other health conditions?

If you have any concerns about whether a particular health condition might cause complications with the vaccine you should discuss them with your primary care physician before receiving the vaccine.

Other questions

How long will the vaccine protect me?

We don't know yet how long the vaccine will protect us for. Scientists are continuing to monitor people who have already received the vaccine. It's possible you may need to get a booster shot later to maintain your protection from the virus.

Is the vaccine effective against new strains that have been discovered?

Yes. All indications so far are that the vaccines are effective against the new strains.

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