

COVID-19 Vaccination Factsheet

Updated: 3/3/2021

COVID-19 is killing millions of people, especially people of color. The good news is that we now have safe and effective vaccines. These vaccines teach your body to develop natural defenses to fight the virus. Getting more than 75% of our community vaccinated as soon as possible is our best chance of ending public health policies like distancing and masking. This will help stop spread of the virus. Get the vaccine to protect yourself, your family, and our community. Here are [11 facts](#) about the vaccines:

1. The COVID-19 vaccine trials were very thorough.

Caution: You may hear concerns that the trials were rushed. You may also hear that mRNA technology is new or untested.

Vaccine experts around the world worked together to develop these vaccines. mRNA vaccines and other coronavirus vaccines have been studied for over 10 years. So, we had a head start. All trials followed safety protocols and were reviewed by the FDA. **No shortcuts were taken.**

2. The COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing severe disease.

Caution: You might hear that only one dose of an mRNA vaccine is needed for protection.

All approved COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. If your vaccine is two doses, you do need both doses for full protection.

3. The COVID-19 vaccines were found to be very safe.

Caution: You might hear false concerns about the vaccine causing infertility, Bell's palsy, or autoimmune disease.

Over 250 million people have been vaccinated around the world. Over 50 million people have been vaccinated in the US. And over 1 million people in CT have been vaccinated.

The vaccines are very safe. There is no impact on fertility or other negative effects from the vaccine. But we are seeing negative long-term effects of COVID-19 infections, including lung, brain, and heart damage. This makes it more important to get vaccinated.

4. The vaccines were tested among diverse populations.

Caution: You may hear that the vaccines were not tested among racial and ethnic minorities.

The vaccine trials made sure that the numbers of Black and Hispanic/Latinx participants are in line with national percentages. In fact, in New Haven, recruitment stopped until we had enough people of color in the study! There were about 23,000 Black and Hispanic/Latinx participants in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials. **The vaccines work just as well and were just as safe in all racial and ethnic groups.**

5. Vaccines tell your immune system how to spot a protein on the virus that causes COVID-19 and create an "army" to attack it.

Caution: You might hear false concerns that the vaccine causes COVID-19.

When your body sees the protein from the vaccine again, either with a second vaccine dose or from infection, your "army" attacks it. **If you get fevers, chills, and muscle aches a couple of days after a second vaccine dose, it is a sign that the vaccine is working but you are NOT actually sick.** You can take Tylenol or Motrin for these symptoms.

6. If you have allergies to foods, medications, or other vaccines, you can be vaccinated.

Caution: You may hear that you should not get vaccinated if you have allergies to food, medicines, or other vaccines.

Of the first 20 million people vaccinated in the US, only 21 people had severe allergic reactions. This is very rare. **We recommend that most people with allergies get vaccinated.**

7. If you had a COVID-19 infection you should still be vaccinated.

Caution: You might hear that you do not need to be vaccinated if you had COVID-19.

You should get vaccinated because antibody protection after getting COVID-19 only lasts a few months. It is not permanent. Studies showed that **the vaccine still helps those who had COVID-19.**

8. Women who are pregnant or nursing can get the vaccine.

Caution: You may hear that pregnant and nursing mothers are not eligible for the vaccine.

Pregnant women are at very high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. They are also at high risk for preterm birth and stillbirth if they get COVID-19. Women should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their doctor. **If you are pregnant and/or nursing and you want the vaccine, you can get it.**

9. The vaccine is safe for people with weakened immune systems.

Caution: You might hear that those who have weakened immune systems (or immunocompromised) are at risk for getting COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live virus and cannot cause COVID-19. So, there are no safety concerns in immunocompromised people. This is important because immunocompromised people are at high risk for severe COVID-19 disease. So, it is even more important for people with weakened immune systems to be vaccinated.

10. The vaccine is safe for people with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Caution: You may hear that it is not safe for people with medical conditions to get vaccinated.

The trials included people with chronic medical conditions. The vaccines were safe and effective in these people. People with medical conditions like diabetes and heart disease are at very high risk for severe COVID-19 infection. So, it is **very important for people with medical conditions to be vaccinated.**

11. Get your vaccine as soon as you can.

Caution: You may hear that people are waiting to see how others do before getting vaccinated.

The longer people wait to get vaccinated, the longer the virus spreads in the community. As it spreads, the virus can change and make vaccines and treatments less effective. Severe COVID-19 can be very dangerous. **The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you, your family, and our community are protected.**