

# Get Your Questions Answered About COVID-19 Vaccines

There is a lot of information out there about COVID-19 vaccines. It can be hard to keep up. This sheet will answer some frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines.

## Do COVID-19 vaccines work?



**Yes.** COVID-19 vaccines reduce your risk of:



Getting sick with COVID-19



Severe COVID-19 symptoms



Hospital stay for COVID-19



Death from COVID-19



## Is it better to get a COVID-19 vaccine, or to get natural immunity from getting sick with COVID-19?

**It is much safer to get the COVID-19 vaccine.** If you get sick with COVID-19, you will develop some natural immunity. Natural immunity is the protection you get from a disease when you actually get sick. Doctors do not know how long natural immunity will last or how well it protects you. It can be different for each person. Plus, if you get COVID-19, you have some risks. If you get COVID-19, instead of the vaccine:

- You may have severe symptoms.
- You may have long-term health problems, even after you get better.
- You may have to go stay in the hospital to treat COVID-19.
- You could even die.

## Will COVID-19 vaccines cause long-term effects?

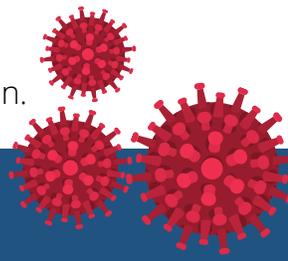
**Long-term effects are rare for any vaccine.** That includes the COVID-19 vaccine. If you have a reaction to the vaccine, it will likely happen within 6 weeks of getting it. During clinical trials, they monitored participants for more than 6 weeks to make sure there were no harmful long-term effects.

## How are side effects from COVID-19 vaccines reported and monitored?

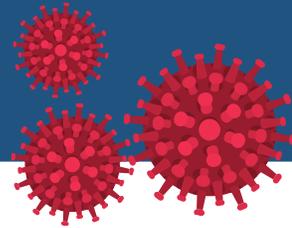
When someone has a possible side effect after they get the vaccine, they can report it to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Anyone can report to this system, even if they are not sure if the vaccine caused the side effect. **Vaccine safety experts look at the reports to decide which ones may be related to the vaccine. Many are not.**

## Can the COVID-19 vaccines affect my fertility?

**No.** Vaccines do not cause fertility (ability to have children) problems in women or men.



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## How were COVID-19 vaccines developed so quickly?

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are a special type of vaccine that use mRNA technology. Research on mRNA vaccines started in the 1970s. COVID-19 is a part of a family of viruses, called coronaviruses. Earlier coronaviruses include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) of 2002 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) of 2012. **Researchers have been working on a vaccine for the coronavirus since SARS and MERS were discovered. This helped vaccine makers respond to the pandemic quickly. Vaccine makers followed all the normal steps to make the vaccines and get them approved.**

## What are the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine?

Most of the ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines are also found in foods. These include fats, sugars, and salts. Other ingredients are like those in other vaccines. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals (such as aluminum or mercury). None of the vaccines have eggs, gelatin, latex, or preservatives.



No metals



No eggs



No gelatin



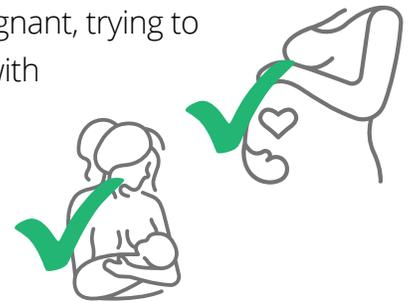
No latex



No preservatives

## Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding?

**Yes.** COVID-19 vaccines are safe and recommended for women who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. It can be very dangerous if you get sick with COVID-19 while you are pregnant because you are more likely to have severe symptoms. Getting COVID-19 can also harm your baby. But, if you get the vaccine, you are likely to pass on immunity to your baby.

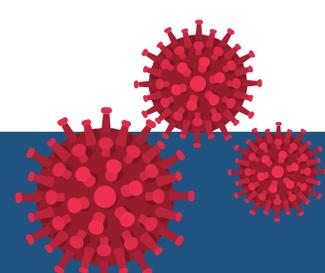


## Can the mRNA vaccines change my DNA?

**✗ No.** The mRNA vaccines cannot change your DNA in any way. The vaccine teaches your immune system to fight the virus. After this happens, your body no longer needs the vaccine's ingredients. Your body breaks them down and gets rid of them.

## Are mRNA vaccines considered vaccines?

**✓ Yes.** mRNA vaccines are vaccines. They still teach your immune system how to fight the virus, just like any other vaccine. Most other vaccines use a weakened or inactive virus or part of a protein from the virus to teach your body. These vaccines use mRNA.



### Some of this information came from:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- John Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services