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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SARS-CoV-2 VACCINE

What is an mRNA vaccine?

mRNA is a molecule that all organisms use to make proteins. The mRNA vaccine for COVID-19 creates a “spike protein” found on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The spike protein stimulates your immune system to make antibodies to protect you from natural infection.

Can the mRNA change my DNA?

The mRNA never enters the nucleus where genetic material is kept so the vaccine cannot cause changes or damage your DNA.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

The mRNA virus does NOT contain live virus so cannot give you the virus. Any vaccine reactions are your body’s own immune response, which means the vaccine is working.

Who will receive the vaccine in Phase 1?

Health care personnel, long term facility residents, non-healthcare essential workers (food and agriculture, transportation, education, police, firefighters, manufacturing, IT and communication, water and wastewater), adults with underlying medical conditions, people over the age of 65

What are potential side effects from the vaccine?

Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated. Your arm may be sore, red or warm to the touch. The 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.

Is the vaccine safe since it was made so fast?

Operation Warp Speed saved time by coordinating manufacturing and distribution of the vaccine. The safety trials were still guided by science and trial studies included large numbers held to the same high standards of other vaccine trials.

Will my insurance cover the cost, and how expensive is it?

The vaccine is free, costs covered by the government in an effort to allow everyone to receive it.

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Do you need a doctor's order to receive the vaccine?

No, vaccine sites screen eligible patients.

How many doses are needed and why?

Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone has to come back in a few weeks for the second one to get the maximum protection the vaccine can offer.

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine and how long does it take?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines prevented symptomatic COVID-19 94-95% of the time. Maximum efficiency occurs 2-3 weeks after the second dose.

Why should I take the vaccine if I still have to wear a mask and socially distance?

The vaccine significantly decreases one's risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. This is especially important since hospitals across the nation are filling up as the pandemic gets worse. In addition, once enough people have gotten the vaccine, herd immunity can protect those who cannot get it. If the virus has no more hosts to attack it cannot survive, and we will be much closer to returning to our normal lives.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine be given with other vaccines?

No. There should be 14 days separation between the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccinations

Does the vaccine provide long term immunity?

We do not yet know how long a person's protection lasts, but ongoing research will provide us with more information.

Would you recommend the vaccine to your own family?

Absolutely, yes. My parents and inlaws have received it.

Do I still need to socially distance, hand wash, and wear a mask after getting the vaccine?

Yes! The vaccine is not a perfect fix, so these hygiene measures are still necessary to help control the spread of the virus and keep each other safe.

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