



# COVID-19 Vaccine: Myths vs. Facts

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The successful testing and now distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines have been perhaps the most hopeful developments since the initial spread of the virus. But with this optimistic news comes a lot of chatter, both from qualified and unqualified sources. You've likely seen many posts about it on social media or heard several friends, family, or even strangers weigh in on it.

You might have already heard several different opinions or claims about how effective it is, how it works, or how soon it will be available, and you may not be sure what to believe. So we'll help you set the record straight on some common questions and misconceptions about the COVID-19 vaccines and separate the myths from the facts.

## **Myth #1: "The vaccine will give me COVID-19."**

You can rest assured that you will not get COVID-19 from any vaccine currently being developed or used in the United States because none of them contain the live virus. Symptoms experienced after vaccination, including fever or achiness, are signs that your body is building immunity.

It usually takes a few weeks for the body to build an immune response once you receive the vaccine, so you can still be infected if you come into contact with an infected person during that time period. Additionally, no vaccine is 100% effective, so it is still possible to catch COVID-19 after this period. However, since your body already has built an immune response, the chance of developing severe symptoms is greatly reduced.

## **Myth #2: "I don't need a vaccine because I had COVID-19."**

People who have had the disease in the past will likely still be advised to get a vaccine when it's available to them. Currently, experts don't know how long someone is protected from getting infected again after recovering from COVID-19. The time period of natural immunity can vary from person to person, but it's possible that it doesn't last very long.

The CDC is still trying to learn more about natural immunity and will keep the public informed as new information comes to light.

## **Myth #3: "The vaccine will alter my DNA."**

According to the CDC, the COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA, which enables our cells to create a protein that signals an immune response. Using mRNA will not affect the DNA in your cells. Your cells will break down and dispose of the mRNA after it has served its purpose.

## **Myth #4: "The COVID-19 vaccine isn't safe because it was rushed."**

While these vaccines do use new technology and were developed quickly, the use of mRNA in these vaccines is actually a process that researchers have been working on for over 30 years. These vaccines have gone through rigorous clinical trials and have been thoroughly scrutinized by the FDA before being deemed safe and effective for emergency use.

## **Myth #5: "I don't need the vaccine because I'm healthy."**

It's true that most people who are young and healthy have survived COVID-19 without much difficulty, but it's also true that the disease can damage the lungs, heart, and brain. Because this disease is so new, we don't know what kind of long-term health problems it can cause.

Another reason to get the vaccine is that it protects those around you. Even if you can quickly recover from COVID-19, someone that you could potentially infect may not. This makes vaccines important in protecting populations—not just individuals.

## **Myth #6: "I don't need to wear a mask or practice social distancing after I get vaccinated."**

Even after you get vaccinated, you should continue wearing a mask and staying safe. The first reason for this is because the vaccines that are currently approved for emergency use by the FDA require two doses given 3-4 weeks apart. Your body needs this time to build an immune response.

Another reason is that no vaccine is 100% effective at preventing COVID-19. People who get the vaccine are much less likely to get the disease (and if they do, they have a much lower risk of developing severe symptoms), but they can still carry and spread the disease to more vulnerable populations.

## **Myth #7: "The pandemic will end when we have vaccines."**

We can't expect for life to return to how it was before COVID-19 until around 70% of the population is immune. By then, we will have achieved herd immunity, which is the point at which the disease will no longer be likely to spread. Because companies are still working to make the vaccines available in phases, it will take time to get to that point.

With companies producing and distributing vaccines to select groups set by the Texas state government, we can hopefully expect these vaccinations to be available to the public soon. Until then, let's all do our part to use what we have learned this past year to keep ourselves and each other safe.

### **Sources:**

[CDC | Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) [FDA | Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#) [FDA | Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine](#) [CDC | Information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#)