Common Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine Answered

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

Vaccines work with your body's natural defenses so your body will be ready to recognize and fight the virus, if you are exposed (also called immunity). But we cannot stop using all of our prevention tools. Wearing masks, washing our hands, watching our distance when we're around others and getting vaccinated. In fact, vaccines are one of the most effective tools to protect your health and prevent disease.
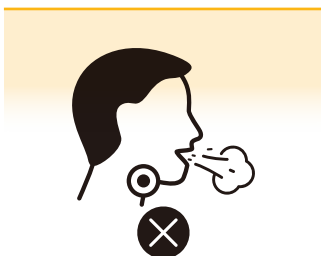
Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No, none of the approved COVID-19 vaccines contain the virus that causes COVID-19. It does take a few weeks after vaccination for your body to build up antibodies to protect you from the virus. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after getting the vaccine and still get sick.

Were the vaccines developed too quickly for them to be safe?

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Tens of thousands of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. Before being authorized for use, all COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they met safety standards and protected adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns in the trials. CDC and the FDA continue to monitor the vaccines to make sure they are safe.

Will the vaccine make me sick?

After getting the vaccine, some people feel tired or have sore muscles, mild fever, a headache or swollen lymph nodes. The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities. These are normal signs that mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. Side effects are most common after the second dose. Most of these side effects should go away in a few days. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Will the COVID-19 vaccines protect me from the Delta variant and other coronavirus variants?

Yes, those who are fully vaccinated are protected against variants — even if they were inoculated before Delta and other variants appeared.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

According to the CDC, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems in males or females. There is also no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine would reduce your natural fertility or harm the placenta or fetus. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 therefore the vaccines cannot make anyone sick with COVID-19, including pregnant people or their babies.

MEMORIAL HERMANN®

Should I get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

Yes, you should still be vaccinated because you can become infected more than once. Although you may have some short-term natural protection (known as immunity) after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last. Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have terrible symptoms that continue for months. If you have had COVID-19, ask your doctor, nurse, or clinic when you should be vaccinated.

When should I get the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot?

The CDC and FDA are looking into this question and will give healthcare providers and the public recommendations on the timing for booster shots soon. Memorial Hermann will be ready to help you obtain your booster shot when its time.

Why do I still have to wear a mask after I'm vaccinated?

Right now, experts don't know how long the vaccine will protect you, so it's a good idea to continue following the guidelines from the CDC and your local health department. To help stop viral transmission, the CDC recommends that everyone in areas with high COVID-19 infection rates wear masks in public indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status.

Do I need to have insurance to get vaccinated?

No insurance, no problem. The government will cover the cost. And, don't worry, we don't share your personal information with anyone.

Do I have to be a legal resident to receive the vaccine?

No, there is no residency or citizenship requirement to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and you do not need a social security number.

Where can I find out more about the COVID-19 vaccines?

To learn more, visit:

www.memorialhermann.org/coronavirus

www.CDC.gov

www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus

Feeling sick and not sure what to do?

Call the free 24/7 Nurse Health Line. You can talk to our trained nurses about your health concerns. Bilingual interpreters are available. Call 713.338.7979 or visit nursehealthline.org

MEMORIAL HERMANN®