

Should I Get My COVID-19 Vaccine?

Vaccines jumpstart the body's natural ability to fight a virus or bacteria without having to get sick from the germs first. In the case of COVID-19, the vaccine protects you from the COVID-19 virus.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

It's the safest and best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19. It's also the best and safest way to get to herd immunity.

How it protects you:

- The vaccine teaches your immune system to make antibodies to COVID-19.
- If you're ever exposed to COVID-19 in the future, these antibodies will help your body fight off COVID-19 before it makes you sick.

How it protects the herd:

Herd immunity is when enough people become immune to an infectious disease like COVID-19.

- Herd immunity is the only way to stop the pandemic.
- With herd immunity, even people who aren't immune are protected by the large group of people who are.
- The more people who get the vaccine, the faster we'll get to herd immunity.
- It's much safer to get to herd immunity with vaccine instead of infection.

Is there any reason to not get the vaccine?

The vaccine is safe for almost everyone.

The only reasons not to get it are:

- You're younger than 16. (The vaccine is currently being studied in children.)
- In the past, you've had a serious reaction (such as anaphylaxis) to something in the vaccine. Learn more about this here: [VUMC.org/coronavirus/common-questions-about-covid-vaccines-and-allergies](https://www.vumc.org/coronavirus/common-questions-about-covid-vaccines-and-allergies)

The only reasons to wait to get the vaccine are:

- **You've had monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19 in the past 90 days.** You should still get the vaccine, but wait until 90 days have passed. This is so the antibodies are no longer in your system. They can keep the vaccine from working as well as it should.
- **You've had any other vaccine in the past 14 days.** You can get your COVID-19 vaccine when it's been at least 14 days.
- **You test positive for COVID-19 before or after your first shot.**
 - If you get COVID-19 *before* your first shot, wait until you no longer have any signs of COVID-19 and you've met the criteria to come out of isolation.
 - If you get COVID-19 *after* your first shot, wait at least 6 weeks and after you've recovered before getting the second shot. Getting it before that would raise your risk of side effects from the second shot.
- **You have a fever or feel sick on the day of either shot.** Reschedule when you're better.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The vaccine will not give you COVID-19. In fact, **this is impossible!** The vaccine is very safe.

People are telling me they feel sick after the vaccine. What does this mean?

The vaccine can cause side effects that make you feel bad, but this doesn't mean you're sick. Side effects are just signs that the vaccine is working.

Side effects are usually very mild and may include a sore arm, feeling run down, low fever, and muscle aches. They can be worse after the second shot. These usually last only a day or two.

The vaccine is very safe. It cannot give you COVID-19!

If I've already had COVID-19, do I still need the vaccine?

Yes. You may have some immunity, but it's not clear how long it will last. You should still get the vaccine. Your immune response is expected to be stronger and last longer with the vaccine.

Can't I just get my immunity by getting COVID-19?

You shouldn't do this. It's dangerous. Here's why:

- You may get very sick, or even die.
- You may spread the virus to others, who could also get very sick.
- It may not give you as strong of an immune response as the vaccine.
- You can't know in advance how sick COVID-19 will make you. It isn't worth the risk.

If I'm not worried about getting COVID-19, why should I get the vaccine?

- The more people who get the vaccine, the faster we'll get to herd immunity.
- The vaccine will help protect your family and friends.
- Getting the vaccine will also help protect people who can't get the vaccine.

Learn more

To find out more about the COVID-19 vaccine, you can:

- Go to the Vanderbilt Health website to see common questions and answers about the vaccine:
[VUMC.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines](https://www.vanderbilthealth.com/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines)
- Watch Vanderbilt Health's series of easy to understand videos about the vaccine:
[VUMC.org / coronavirus/covid-vaccine-videos](https://www.vanderbilthealth.com/coronavirus/covid-vaccine-videos)
- Call the Vanderbilt Health COVID-19 hotline at (888) 312-0847.