COVID-19 Vaccines Facts

Vaccines are one of the tools we have to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

We need to use all of our prevention tools to stop this pandemic. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to protect your health and prevent disease. Vaccines work with your body's natural defences **so that you will be ready to fight the virus** if you are exposed (also called immunity). Other steps, like wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth and staying at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people you don't live with, also help stop the spread of COVID-19.

According to the CDC, all COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the US and Canada have been shown to be highly effective at preventing infection. Experts also think that getting vaccinated may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. These vaccines cannot give you the disease.

The vaccines are safe. All the COVID-19 vaccines that are being used have gone through the same safety tests and meet the same standards as any other vaccines produced through the years.

Different types of COVID-19 vaccines will be available. Most of these vaccines are given in two shots, one at a time and spaced apart. The first shot gets your body ready. The second shot is given at least three weeks later to make sure you have full protection. If you are told you need two shots, make sure that you get both of them. The vaccines may work in slightly different ways, but all types of the vaccines will help protect you.
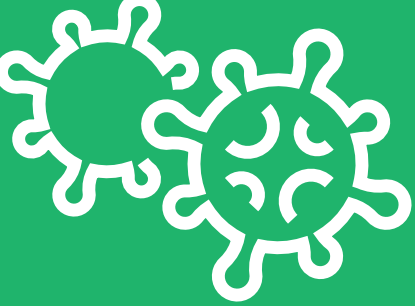
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The vaccines may cause side effects in some people, like sore muscles, feeling tired, or mild fever. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a day or two. **Having these types of side effects does NOT mean that you have COVID-19**. If you have questions about your health after your shot, call your doctor, nurse, or clinic. As with any medicine, it is rare but possible to have a serious reaction, such as not being able to breathe. It is very unlikely that this will happen, but if it does, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

When you get the vaccine, you and your healthcare worker will both need to wear masks. CDC recommends that during the pandemic, people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside their household, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.
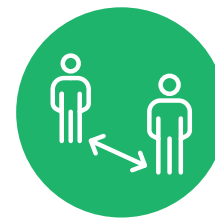
Even after you get your vaccine, you will need to keep wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth, washing your hands often, and staying at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people you do not live with. This gives you and others the best protection from catching the virus. Right now, experts don't know how long the vaccine will protect you, so it's a good idea to continue following the guidelines from local government and health authorities. **We also know not everyone will be able to get vaccinated right away, so it's still important to protect yourself and others.**