The Truth About COVID-19 Vaccines

If you or your loved ones are hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccine, it is important to know the facts so that you can make an informed decision. Geriatrician Michael Wasserman, MD, CMD, and Lori Porter, CEO and co-founder of the National Association of Health Care Assistants, share the vaccine truths and dispel the myths.

**Let’s Start with the Facts**

- The COVID-19 vaccine helps protect people by creating an antibody immune response. While it isn’t guaranteed to be 100% protective, if you do get sick after you have the vaccine, it will protect you from getting seriously ill.
- The COVID-19 vaccines have been studied thoroughly to make sure they are as safe as possible. You may have heard that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has given the vaccines Emergency Use Authorization. This means that the application period was shorter than usual, but the vaccines have still met the highest standards for safety and efficacy.
- The vaccine won’t make you sick with COVID-19. However, some people may experience side effects. The most common are pain, swelling, and redness in the arm where you get the shot. Having headaches or feeling tired is not uncommon. On rare occasions, people have had serious allergic reactions.
- For the two-dose vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna), you need to get both doses for the vaccine to be effective. It is still important to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands often even after you get your second shot.
- You should get vaccinated even if you’ve had COVID-19 and recovered. It is possible to get COVID-19 again after you’ve already had it, although you are generally safe for 90 days.
- If you’re thinking of taking your chances of getting COVID-19 instead of taking the vaccine, you are putting yourself and others at risk. Although you might get no or mild symptoms, you might also get sick and maybe even die, or you might make a loved one seriously ill.

**Now Let’s Look at Some of the Myths**

**Myth:** The vaccine will alter or change your DNA or genetics.

**Fact:** The vaccine doesn’t affect fertility, and it doesn’t cause infertility. This is a misconception that is being spread on social media; it isn’t true. There is no connection between the vaccine and fertility. On the other hand, getting COVID-19 can be dangerous for an expectant mother.

**Myth:** The vaccine contains the COVID-19 virus in it and will make you sick.

**Fact:** The vaccine is made with mRNA in the vaccine tells your body how to make some proteins you need to fight infection. It can’t get into the part of the cell where DNA is stored.

**Myth:** The vaccine will not affect your test results.

**Fact:** If you have any questions, your practitioner will be happy to answer them. Know that you won’t be judged or dismissed because you are hesitant about or afraid to take the vaccine. Your health and your loved one’s health are important, and we want you to be safe and help you make informed decisions.

**Questions to Ask Your Practitioner**

- Where can I go to get factual information about the vaccine?
- How do I know if something I read is true or not?
- My loved one is afraid of vaccines. How can I make him/her feel less fearful?
- What if my loved one just doesn’t want the vaccine?

**Things You Can Do**

- Talk to your loved ones honestly about the COVID-19 vaccines. Listen and respond without judgement to their concerns.
- Encourage your loved one to stay safe by wearing a mask, social distancing, and frequently washing hands.
- Seek information from reliable sources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**For More Information**


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