

COVID-19 Vaccination Factsheet

Updated: 2/25/2021

COVID-19 is killing millions of people, especially people of color. The good news is that we now have safe and effective vaccines. These vaccines teach your body to develop natural defenses to fight the virus. Getting more than 75% of our community vaccinated is our best chance of ending public health policies like distancing and masking. This will help stop spread of the virus. Get the vaccine to protect yourself, your family, and our community. Here are 10 facts about the vaccines:

1. The COVID-19 vaccine trials were the largest and most thorough vaccine trials ever.

Caution: You may hear concerns that the trials were rushed. You may also hear that mRNA technology is new or untested.

Vaccine experts around the world worked together to develop these vaccines. mRNA vaccines and other coronavirus vaccines have been studied for over 10 years. So, we had a head start. All trials followed safety protocols and were reviewed by the FDA. **No shortcuts were taken.**

2. The COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing severe disease.

Caution: You might hear that only one dose of an mRNA vaccine is needed for protection.

All approved COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. If your vaccine is two doses, you do need both doses for full protection.

3. The COVID-19 vaccines are very safe.

Caution: You might hear false concerns about the vaccine causing infertility, Bell's palsy, or autoimmune disease.

Very large vaccine studies, with over 70,000 people, have shown the vaccines are very safe. There is no impact on fertility or other negative effects. **YNHH has safely vaccinated over 60,000 people, and over 56 million people have received a vaccine nationwide.** We are seeing negative long-term effects of COVID-19 infections, including lung, brain, and heart damage. This makes it more important to get vaccinated.

4. The vaccines were tested among diverse populations.

Caution: You may hear that the vaccines were not tested among racial and ethnic minorities.

The vaccine trials made sure that the numbers of Black and Latinx participants are in line with national percentages. In fact, in New Haven, recruitment stopped until we had enough people of color in the study! **The vaccines work just as well and were just as safe in all racial and ethnic groups.**

5. Vaccines tell your immune system how to spot a protein on the virus that causes COVID-19 and create an "army" to attack it.

Caution: You might hear false concerns that the vaccine causes COVID-19.

When your body sees the protein from the vaccine again, either with a second vaccine dose or from infection, your "army" attacks it. **If you get fevers, chills, and muscle aches a couple of days after a second vaccine dose, it is a sign that the vaccine is working but you are NOT actually sick.** You can take Tylenol or Motrin for these symptoms.

6. If you have allergies to foods, medications, or other vaccines, you can be vaccinated.

Caution: You may hear that you should not get vaccinated if you have allergies to food, medicines, or other vaccines.

Of the first 20 million people vaccinated in the US, only 21 people had severe allergic reactions. This is very rare. **We recommend that most people with allergies get vaccinated.**

7. If you had a COVID-19 infection you should still be vaccinated.

Caution: You might hear that you do not need to be vaccinated if you had COVID-19.

You should get vaccinated because antibody protection after getting COVID-19 only lasts a few months. It is not permanent. Studies showed that **the vaccine still helps those who had COVID-19.**

8. Women who are pregnant or nursing can get the vaccine.

Caution: You may hear that pregnant and nursing mothers are not eligible for the vaccine.

Pregnant women are at very high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. They are also at high risk for preterm birth and stillbirth if they get COVID-19. Women should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their doctor. **If you are pregnant and/or nursing and you want the vaccine, you can get it.**

9. The vaccine is safe for people with weakened immune systems.

Caution: You might hear that those who have weakened immune systems (or immunocompromised) are at risk for getting COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live virus and cannot cause COVID-19. So, there are no safety concerns in immunocompromised people. This is important because immunocompromised people are at high risk for severe COVID-19 disease. So, it is even more important for people with weakened immune systems to be vaccinated.

10. The vaccine is safe for people with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Caution: You may hear that it is not safe for people with medical conditions to get vaccinated.

People with medical conditions like diabetes and heart disease are at high risk for severe COVID-19 infection. So, it is **very important for people with medical conditions to be vaccinated.**