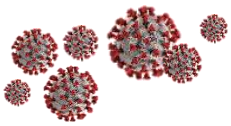
COVID-19 Vaccine Facts



ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINES

Currently, two COVID-19 vaccines are available:

1. Pfizer-BioNTech. Requires two doses, 21 days apart. (FDA fact sheet, https://go.usa.gov/xAmcE)
2. Moderna. Requires two doses, 28 days apart. (FDA fact sheet, https://go.usa.gov/xAmcV)

IMPORTANT COVID-19 VACCINE FACTS

- There is no live virus in either vaccine.
- You cannot get COVID-19 infection from either vaccine.
- The vaccine is voluntary and highly encouraged.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility.
- Protection is not immediate. After the second dose, it takes about seven days for the vaccine to achieve 95% effectiveness.
- Vaccines protect the individual, but we do not know if it prevents the individual from spreading the virus.
- Until widespread vaccination has been achieved, we still need to practice public health measures such as wearing masks, physically distancing, and washing hands frequently.

SAFETY

Both vaccines have been granted an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and have been held to the same rigorous safety standards as all vaccines in the U.S. This means the FDA reviewed safety and effectiveness data from thousands of individuals participating in ongoing clinical trials and determined the potential benefits of the vaccine outweigh the possible risks.

EFFECTIVENESS

Data from studies of both vaccines show they are highly effective at preventing COVID-19. In clinical studies, the Pfizer vaccine was shown to be 95% effective and the Moderna vaccine was 94.5% effective after their second doses.

HOW THE VACCINES WORK

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were designed to prevent infection from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. They trigger an immune response in our bodies, which makes antibodies to fight the virus.

Both vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. They carry genetic material to teach our cells how to create a harmless piece of “spike protein,” which is found on the surface of the virus. It is that harmless protein that triggers an immune response, producing antibodies and keeping us from getting infected if the virus enters our body.

The vaccines do not enter the cell nucleus and do not affect or interact with our DNA in any way.

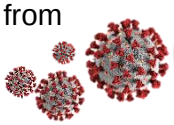
COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

The most common side effects, as with most vaccines, include redness, swelling, and pain at the injection site, low-grade fever, tiredness, headaches, chills, and joint pain.

In rare cases, a vaccine may cause an allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction typically occurs within a few minutes of receiving a vaccine. This is why you will be asked to wait for a short period after being vaccinated to ensure you will be near trained medical professionals should a rare but severe allergic reaction occur.

COVID-19 VACCINE BENEFITS

- ✓ Getting vaccinated will protect you from COVID-19.
- ✓ A vaccine is a safer way to build protection against the virus. COVID-19 is a serious disease that can have life-threatening complications and many of the long-term health consequences are not known.
- ✓ The COVID-19 vaccine will help stop the pandemic. Using all the tools available to us, including the vaccine and public health measures like wearing a mask and physical distancing, will prevent the virus from spreading.



NAVAL MEDICAL FORCES PACIFIC