Debunking Common COVID-19 Vaccine Myths

The vaccines developed to fight COVID-19 have been shown to be both safe and highly effective at preventing the disease. You may have heard some inaccurate information about them. Let's set the record straight, with truths from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Johns Hopkins, the Mayo Clinic and other respected health organizations.

Myth: "You can get COVID-19 from receiving the vaccine."

Fact: *No,* you cannot get COVID-19 from receiving the vaccine because the COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus. mRNA vaccines help human cells make a protein that triggers an immune response.

Myth: "You already had COVID-19 so you don't need the vaccine."

Fact: *No.* You should get the vaccine. While a previous coronavirus infection might prevent you from reinfection, experts are not sure how long this protection may last. When enough people are vaccinated against a disease, it is harder for the disease to spread. This "community immunity" prevents the virus from traveling easily from person to person.

Myth: "COVID-19 vaccines can cause severe side effects."

Fact: Though most people have no significant reactions, the vaccine may cause side effects including fever, chills, muscle aches, joint pain, headaches and redness and pain at the injection site. Allergic reactions are more common than what we see with other vaccines but are still relatively rare and much lower than the risks associated with getting COVID-19. Each vaccine site is well equipped to handle severe allergic reaction.

Myth: "COVID-19 vaccines alter your DNA."

Fact: *No,* mRNA vaccines that protect us from COVID-19 do not alter DNA. Rather, these vaccines work outside of our cells' nucleus (where our DNA is kept) and teach the cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. Your cells break down and get rid of the mRNA soon after they have finished using the instructions.

Myth: "You can stop wearing a mask once you've had the COVID-19 vaccine."

Fact: *No,* you still need to wear a mask. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine prevents you from getting sick but may not stop the coronavirus from entering your body. It's uncertain whether people who have been vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus. You still need to practice accepted COVID-19 precautions: keep your mask on and continue physical distancing when you're out in public.

Myth: "COVID-19 vaccines are unsafe because they were developed so quickly."

Fact: *No.* COVID-19 vaccines were authorized under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). An EUA includes the same steps taken in full-term clinical trials—including testing the vaccine on thousands of human participants—only with a consolidated timeline. Multiple federal agencies have worked together to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

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