

Racial and Ethnic Minority Health: Debunking COVID-19 Vaccine Myths

The vaccines developed to fight COVID-19 have been shown to be safe and highly effective at preventing the disease. You may have heard some inaccurate information about how they can affect minorities. Let's set the record straight, with truths from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Johns Hopkins University, the Mayo Clinic, the National Medical Association, and other respected health organizations.



Myth: "Vaccines were not tested on minorities in the clinical trials."

Fact: False. In clinical trials, each vaccine was tested and effective in diverse groups of people across all age, gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds. *About 30% of U.S. participants were Hispanic, Black, Asian, or Native American, and about half were older adults.* There were no significant safety concerns identified in these or any other groups.



Myth: "COVID-19 vaccination is similar to the abuses at Tuskegee."

Fact: No, these are not similar. After the Tuskegee Study, the government changed its research practices to prevent a repeat of mistakes made in Tuskegee. A major issue in Tuskegee was a lack of transparency and consent. By contrast, the highest ethical standards were used in the COVID-19 trials. VA is committed to transparency and is making every effort to give you all of the information on COVID-19 vaccines, so you can make an informed choice. VA's primary goal is to provide safe health care.



Myth: "Current COVID-19 vaccines will not work against the new variants."

Fact: False. Experts believe—and some research shows—that current vaccines offer some protection against the new COVID-19 variants. Vaccine boosters are being developed to further enhance this protection.



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

Fact: False. COVID-19 vaccines were authorized under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 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. Independent groups such as the National Medical Association, *the leading professional society of Black doctors, have reviewed trial results to ensure vaccine safety.*



Myth: "I can't spread COVID-19 after I get the vaccine."

Fact: Scientists don't know yet. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine prevents you from getting severely ill and dying. However, it's uncertain whether people who have been vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus.



Myth: "I'm younger and won't get sick so I don't need the vaccine."

Fact: False. *CDC data suggests that the virus is affecting younger age groups at an increasing rate.* Young Black and Hispanic people are more at risk than Caucasian people due to racial health inequities and social determinants of health. Plus, getting vaccinated helps promote community immunity, which makes it hard for the disease to spread from person to person, and protects those who cannot be vaccinated

Your safe care is our mission.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs