COVID-19 Vaccine:
12 Things You Need to Know

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized several COVID-19 vaccines, and millions of people have been vaccinated. You may be considering what the COVID-19 vaccines mean for you and your family.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a personal choice. To support you as you make your decision, here are 12 facts to consider.

❶ Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting sick.
The COVID-19 vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the coronavirus if you are exposed to it.

❷ People of color are especially vulnerable to severe COVID-19.
Generations of health inequities have caused Black and Hispanic/Latin Americans and other communities of color to be at greater risk of getting severe COVID-19 and death from the disease.

❸ Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 helps others in your community.
Older people and those living with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes are more likely to experience severe — even fatal — cases of COVID-19. The more people who receive the coronavirus vaccines, the sooner vulnerable people can feel safe among others.

❹ More vaccinations for COVID-19 mean a chance to return to our regular activities.
After over a year of coronavirus pandemic closures, cancellations and postponements, everyone is eager to return to work, school, sports, family celebrations and social activities. Every person who gets the COVID-19 vaccine helps us all move closer to enjoying these activities again.

❺ Though the COVID-19 vaccine development was fast, it did not skip steps.
No steps were skipped in making the COVID-19 vaccines. Scientists used years of existing research and technology to make — and thoroughly test — all of the approved vaccines. This made the process faster.

❻ Diversity in COVID-19 vaccine testing helped assess safety and effectiveness.
COVID-19 affects everyone, so scientists made sure clinical trial participants for the vaccines included people of different ages and races, as well as people with existing health conditions.

❼ Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are temporary and do not mean you're sick.
After the vaccine shots, you might experience a sore arm, a mild fever or body aches, but this doesn't mean you have COVID-19. These symptoms are temporary and signal a natural response as your body's immune system learns to recognize and fight the coronavirus. Lack of side effects does not mean the vaccine was not effective.

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❽ Do you have allergies? You can probably still get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The CDC says people with allergies to certain foods, insects, latex and other common allergens can get a COVID-19 vaccine. Be sure to discuss this with your doctor, who can evaluate and assess your risk.

❾ Here's what we know about pregnancy, breast-feeding and fertility concerns with the COVID-19 vaccines.

Pregnant women should discuss getting the COVID-19 vaccine with their doctor, who can help them decide if the vaccines are appropriate for them. The vaccines are safe for breastfeeding mothers, and do not harm a woman's ability to become pregnant. On the other hand, severe disease is more likely with COVID-19 infection in pregnant individuals, as is premature birth.

❿ If you've already had COVID-19, getting the vaccine will add extra protection.

Current guidelines suggest that anyone previously infected with COVID-19 should be vaccinated.

⓫ COVID-19 vaccines: Time is of the essence.

Some people are deciding not to get the coronavirus vaccines until more people have had them. In the U.S., tens of millions of people have been vaccinated for COVID-19. Waiting too long to be vaccinated allows the coronavirus to continue spreading in the community, with new variants emerging. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you and those around you are protected.

⓬ Vaccines can't save lives unless people get vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccines can help shorten the pandemic when individuals and communities agree to receive them. The vaccines will protect you as well as protect those around you.

How can you decide if you should get the COVID-19 vaccine? Do your research. Take the time to ask questions, and learn all you can about the COVID-19 vaccine from reliable sources so you can make the most informed decision about getting vaccinated.

To learn more and get information about signing up to get the vaccines, visit **hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/**.

If you are unable to access the internet, link to information using a mobile device through this QR code.