The Truth About COVID-19 Vaccines

You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines.

The vaccines used in the U.S. do not contain the virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccines do not change your DNA.

The COVID-19 vaccines used in the U.S. contain genetic material that instructs the body's cells to start building protection against the virus. However, the material never interacts with your DNA. This means the genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect your DNA in any way.

It is safe to get vaccinated even if you have allergies or another health condition.

People with health conditions, such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease, can get vaccinated. Many people with health conditions have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, so it is important to get vaccinated.

The only reason someone may not be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine is if they have an allergy to an ingredient in the vaccine or had a severe allergy to another vaccine or injectable medicine. They still may be able to get vaccinated but should talk to their health care provider before doing so.

## You should get vaccinated even if you had COVID-19 and have antibodies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other experts recommend getting vaccinated even if you already had COVID-19 since you can get COVID-19 again. Getting vaccinated is a safe way to help strengthen your immune system to lower your chance of getting COVID-19 again. The vaccines may also give you better protection against new, more contagious variants of the virus, like the delta variant.

You should get vaccinated even if you are young and healthy.

Young and otherwise healthy people have gotten very sick and died from COVID-19. More contagious variants of COVID-19 are causing more young people to get COVID-19 and be hospitalized. COVID-19 can also cause long-lasting health issues, such as difficulty breathing, muscle and joint pain, headaches, and tiredness. Further, getting vaccinated helps protect your family and friends since people who are vaccinated are less likely to get and spread the virus.

We have not achieved herd immunity.

Herd immunity is when enough people have protection against a disease that the disease is unlikely to spread. There is still COVID-19 transmission in New York City and elsewhere. Experts agree that we have not achieved herd immunity. Every eligible person should get vaccinated to protect themselves and others.
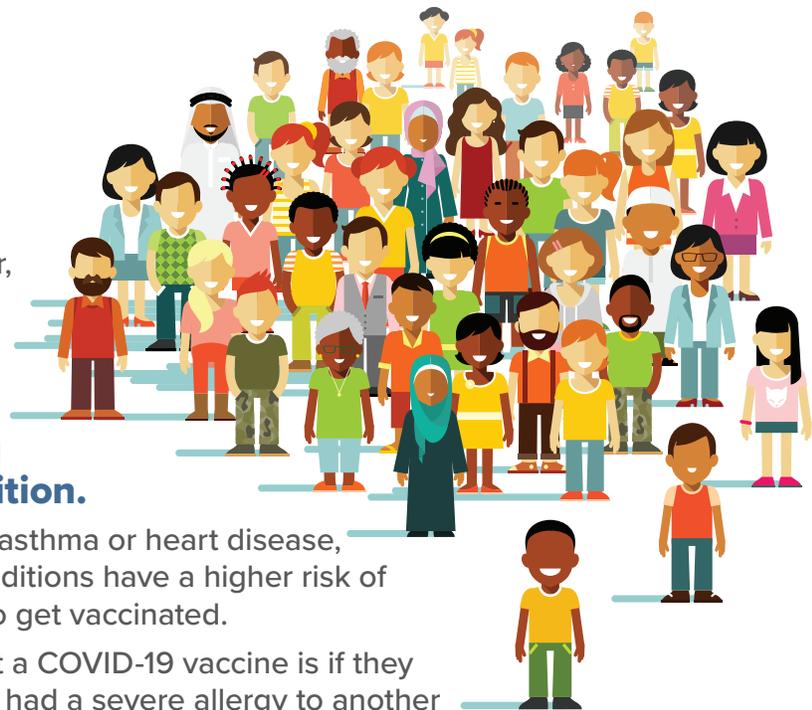
It is safe to get vaccinated if you want to have a baby someday.

Claims linking the COVID-19 vaccines to fertility problems have no scientific evidence supporting them. The CDC and other experts say it is safe for people who may want to have a child to get a COVID-19 vaccine. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to in the future should get vaccinated.

There is no evidence that vitamins or natural remedies protect against COVID-19.

Vaccines are the best way to reduce the risk of getting COVID-19 and prevent severe illness and death if you do get it. The only other proven protections are face coverings, physical distancing, hand hygiene and environmental precautions, such as improved air circulation.

Scientists were able to develop the vaccine so quickly because of significant resources, effort and collaboration.

Billions of dollars were spent and hundreds of scientists from around the world worked nonstop to develop the vaccines. This allowed testing and production of the vaccines to happen at the same time instead of in separate phases. Scientists were also able to build on many years of research from other vaccines, including research on vaccines for other coronaviruses.

We are fortunate that COVID-19 can be stopped with vaccines. Vaccine development has proven to be more challenging for other medical conditions, such as HIV and most cancers. Each infection is different, so vaccine development timelines cannot be compared.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) determined the vaccines to be safe.

COVID-19 vaccines were developed following the same steps as other vaccines. They were created in a laboratory and then went through studies, called clinical trials. The clinical trials were closely monitored and evaluated by the FDA, other government organizations, and independent experts. Each COVID-19 vaccine was tested on tens of thousands of volunteers of different genders, ages, races and ethnicities. The FDA granted emergency use authorization (EUA) for the vaccines after determining that the evidence strongly suggested the benefits of getting vaccinated outweigh any risks. Once data is collected for a longer period of time, the FDA can approve (license) the vaccines. This process has already started.

Serious side effects to the vaccines are very rare.

Hundreds of millions of doses of vaccine have safely been given, and serious side effects have been very rare. Medical providers and the general public can report health events that occur after vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS detects patterns of health events, also known as safety signals. If VAERS finds a safety signal, experts can investigate to see if there is a connection between the health events and a vaccine. VAERS contains all reports submitted, no matter how likely it is that the events are related to the vaccine. For this reason, VAERS reports alone are not used to judge the safety of a vaccine.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, talk to your health care provider, call **311** or visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccine**.

NYC Health