



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 7 – February 15 – February 19, 2021

### COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

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#### **Introduction**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, scientists, doctors, public health officials and governments around the world have been working to develop a vaccine to protect against the disease. Now in less than a year's time since the disease was classified as a pandemic, we have a vaccine approved for use. This a major accomplishment in healthcare and we all hope it means an end in sight for the COVID-19 pandemic, however there are still some reservations by many on the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine. This week we will cover some of the frequently asked questions as well as provide resources where many more answers can be found.

#### **Monday – How Will a Vaccine Prevent COVID-19?**

An effective vaccine will protect a person who receives it by lowering their chances of getting COVID-19 if they encounter the coronavirus. Widespread vaccination for the coronavirus means that the virus will not infect as many people. This will limit spread through communities.

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has spikes of protein on each viral particle. These spikes help the viruses attach to cells and cause disease. Some of the coronavirus vaccines in development are designed to help the body “recognize” these spike proteins and fight the coronavirus that has them.

#### **Tuesday – How Will We Know If a COVID-19 Vaccine is Safe and Effective?**

In order to be declared safe and effective, a COVID-19 vaccine must pass certain tests and standards. Organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences, the National Institutes for Health, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) use scientific data from research to help decide if and when new drugs and vaccines can become available to the public. It is important to note that you cannot get COVID-19 from a vaccine. The vaccines contain proteins or other biological substances to stimulate the immune response, but not the coronavirus itself.

Both Pfizer and Moderna report that their vaccines show approximately 95% efficacy at preventing both mild and severe symptoms of COVID-19. This level of efficacy appears to apply across age groups, racial and ethnic groups, and both sexes, as reported in the Pfizer trial.

#### **Wednesday – If I get the Coronavirus Vaccination, Do I Still Have to Wear a Mask and Maintain Social Distancing?**

Yes. It may take time for everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccination to get one. A vaccine that is 95% effective means that about 1 out of 20 people who get it may not have protection from getting the illness.

Also, while the vaccine may prevent you from getting sick, it is unknown at this time if you can still carry and transmit the virus to others. That is why, until more is understood about how well the vaccine works, continuing with precautions such as mask-wearing and physical distancing will be important.

#### **Thursday – Resources**

So far this week we have only covered a few of the frequently asked questions and answers. Today we will provide more resources to get answers on many more questions.

- Johns Hopkins Medicine

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-what-you-need-to-know>

- World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax/covid-19-vaccine-country-readiness-and-delivery>

- Center for Disease Control



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<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

- Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-vaccine/art-20484859>

- Vaccine Calculator, when is it my turn?

<https://dig.abclocal.go.com/ccg/interactives/vaccine-calculator/index.html>

#### **Friday – Open Discussion**

Now that we've covered a few of the most frequently asked questions and provided resources to find more answers, let's open it up to the group for discussion.

- What are your thoughts on the COVID-19 vaccine? Are you hopeful, concerned or both?
- How do you believe vaccinations will benefit your workplace? Do you believe it would be beneficial? Why or why not?