

Supporting Vaccine Decision-Making



Quick Facts for Your Back Pocket

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Some of your colleagues may want more information about the vaccines. Here are a few simple facts that might help in these conversations:

Concerns about speed and safety:

- **Scientists weren't starting from scratch:** Researchers were already studying coronaviruses before this pandemic began. They were already working on developing vaccines for these types of viruses.
- **The world came together:** Normally, there's a lot of competition around developing things like medications, medical tests, and vaccines. With COVID-19, countries shared information to help speed the process.
- **Money wasn't an issue:** Developing vaccines is usually very expensive, which can cause it to take more time. Both public and private sectors came together to fund the rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines.
- **The pandemic grew quickly:** Tens of thousands of people signed up for the clinical trials. Because the virus spread so rapidly, we were able to study how well the vaccines protected people at a more rapid pace.

Concerns about side effects:

- **Side effects are normal with any vaccine:** All vaccines have potential side effects. This is because your immune system is responding to the vaccine.
- **COVID-19 vaccine side effects are usually mild:** Some people won't have any side effects at all. If you do have side effects, they'll most likely be manageable, and will go away in 1-3 days. Some common side effects are arm pain where the shot was given, headache, feeling very tired, and slight fever. It's more likely you'll experience side effects after your second shot.
- **Johnson & Johnson vaccine:** According to the CDC, in most situations the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred over the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for primary and booster vaccination due to the risk of serious adverse events.

General concerns:

- **You cannot get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines:** The vaccines cause your body to create antibodies against COVID-19. Antibodies are cells that are like little soldiers who will fight off the virus if it tries to invade your body. The vaccines cannot cause your body to create the virus itself. There is no live virus in the vaccine.
- **If you've had COVID-19, it's still recommended you get vaccinated:** It's possible to become re-infected with COVID-19, meaning you can get it again. We don't know how long your body's natural immune response will last. Getting vaccinated will help protect you from getting seriously sick with COVID-19 in the future.
- **It's safe to get vaccinated if you are pregnant, or trying to get pregnant:** The CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccination for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant, or might become pregnant in the future. Pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19. Getting vaccinated will protect both you and your baby.
- **Do not get a COVID-19 vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction** (i.e., anaphylaxis) to vaccines or the components of that vaccine. Anyone with a history of severe medication allergies should talk to their health care provider about whether or not the vaccine is right for them.