COVID-19 VACCINE
SAFETY FACTS

The COVID-19 vaccines continue to help in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the current vaccines are very effective in preventing COVID-19 and provide a high level of protection against contracting the virus. Getting vaccinated will help keep you, your family, your community, and your country healthy and safe.

According to the CDC, safety has always been a top priority when developing and authorizing a COVID-19 vaccine. The below facts may help ease any safety concerns you may have about you and your family members receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine? No. You have to be exposed to the novel coronavirus to get COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines being developed and distributed in the United States do not contain live virus particles, so you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Did the speed of COVID-19 vaccine development compromise its safety? No. The unprecedented speed of the COVID-19 vaccines was due to multiple factors, including past research into these types of vaccines, and did not require skimping on safety. Prior to the current COVID-19 outbreak, scientists had been researching other coronavirus vaccines, for diseases such as SARS and MERS. When the current pandemic hit, scientists were able to build on their past research to develop the COVID-19 vaccines in use today.

Do I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if I've had a COVID-19 infection? Health experts recommend the COVID-19 vaccine even for people who have had a COVID-19 infection. Although infection likely provides some immunity to reinfection, no one knows how long that immunity lasts. Getting vaccinated may provide additional protection and help reduce the spread of the virus.

Current CDC recommendations state that fully vaccinated individuals should continue to wear a mask indoors in public if in an area of substantial or high transmission. Wearing a mask is most important if individuals have a weakened immune system or, if because of their age or an underlying medical condition, are at an increased risk for severe disease. In addition, fully vaccinated individuals should continue to wear a mask where required by laws, rules, regulations, or local guidance.

If an individual has **not** been vaccinated, they should continue to follow current preventive measures including wearing a face mask, practicing social distancing, and washing hands frequently.

Are there any side effects after taking the COVID-19 vaccine? After vaccination, some people may develop a fever, muscle aches, headache, and/or fatigue—symptoms that go away in a few days at most. These side effects are a good sign the vaccine is working, as the symptoms are evidence that your body is developing an immune response.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA? There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine alters your DNA. Both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines; they contain a small amount of RNA (ribonucleic acid) that teaches the cells of the body how to make a protein that causes the immune system to make COVID-19 antibodies. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies COVID-19 vaccine is a viral vector that cannot replicate and elicits an immune response to a protein on its surface. None of these COVID-19 vaccines interact with your DNA.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in your area, contact your local health department, physician's office, or local pharmacy.

Additional details about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines can be found at www.cdc.gov/COVID19. If you are a resident of Alabama, you can refer to the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) website at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19.

By getting vaccinated, you help prevent more illnesses and deaths in America and reduce the effects of COVID-19 for everyone.

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