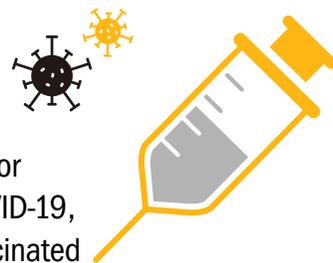# Protect Yourself, Protect Your Family
COVID-19 Vaccines Save Lives

If you are like many people, you may have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines:
Are they safe? Do they work? Are they necessary?

Doctors say that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and they work. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when Hispanics and African Americans get COVID-19, they have a higher chance of getting very sick, going to the hospital or dying. Being vaccinated against COVID-19 will give you a better chance at staying well so that you can protect and take care of your family.

You do not need insurance to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Doctors and nurses can answer your questions. COVID-19 can make you very sick, and vaccines are the best way for you, your family and your neighborhood to stay healthy.

ABOUT THE VACCINE

FDA Approved

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

YES. COVID-19 vaccines were tested on tens of thousands of people and have been given to millions of people since then. Because studies showed that the vaccines are safe, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for people 16 years of age and older. Children ages 12-15 have been approved to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine under the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines were approved for EUA as well. The same testing process was used to obtain this type of authorization, it just took less time to make them available.

If I already had COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

YES. Doctors do not know how long you will be protected after having COVID-19. It is possible to become sick with the virus again.
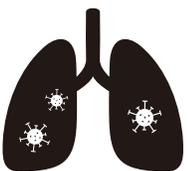
Does having COVID-19 protect me more than getting the vaccine?

NO. Getting a vaccine is the best way to stay healthy. Doctors do not know how long you will stay protected after having COVID-19, so the vaccines are the better way to not get sick. Doctors are learning that vaccines keep you protected longer than only relying on natural immunity.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

NO. It is not possible to get COVID-19 from the vaccines, because the vaccines do not contain any live virus. The vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.

MEMORIAL HERMANN®

Will the flu vaccine keep me from getting COVID-19?

NO. The flu vaccine only protects you from getting the flu. The COVID-19 vaccines are different than the flu vaccine, and they were specially made to help protect you from getting the COVID-19 virus. The flu vaccine is also important, and it can keep you from getting the flu at the same time as COVID-19. This will prevent you from getting sicker. Memorial Hermann recommends you get both vaccines.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

According to the CDC, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems in males or females. There is also no evidence that these vaccines would reduce your natural fertility or harm the placenta or fetus. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the disease; so the vaccines cannot make anyone sick with COVID-19, including pregnant people or their babies.

What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

SIDE EFFECTS ARE USUALLY NOT BAD. Some people will have side effects from the vaccine, but other people will not. Most side effects are not bad and only last 1-3 days. Before you get the vaccine, you will get information about the side effects that could happen. The most common side effects are:
• Tiredness
• Headache
• Muscle and joint pain
• Swollen lymph nodes
• Pain at the injection site

Will the vaccine affect my DNA?

NO. The COVID-19 vaccines do not affect DNA at all. These vaccines are only made of things that tell your body how to fight COVID-19. This vaccine primes your immune system, but then it's gone. It breaks down and is flushed out of your system.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

VACCINES TEACH YOUR BODY. Vaccines teach your body to see and fight the COVID-19 virus. If you are close to someone who has this virus, your body will remember what it learned and will be ready to fight it. Vaccines save millions of lives every year by protecting people from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles and flu.

Can the COVID-19 vaccines be used in children?

RIGHT NOW, people ages 12 and older can get the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, and people ages 18 and older can get the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. Doctors are still running tests to see if these vaccines are safe and work for even younger children. When these tests are done, more children should be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
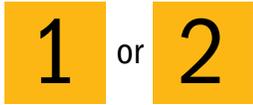
GETTING VACCINATED

How much do vaccines cost?

NO INSURANCE, NO PROBLEM. The government will take care of the cost. But don't worry, we don't share your personal information with anyone.

Do I have to show proof of residency?

NO. You do not have to show proof of residency to get a COVID-19 vaccine, and you do not need a Social Security number.

How many COVID-19 vaccine doses are needed?

IT DEPENDS. You need two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. You can get the second vaccine dose 3 or 4 weeks after the first dose. You only need one dose for the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

Is one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine enough?

IT DEPENDS. If you get the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, you only need one dose. If you get the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, you will need two doses.
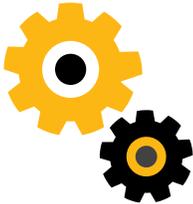
Should I take a day off from work after I get the vaccine?

NO. Most people feel fine the next day. Some people are sore where they had the injection, feel tired or have a low fever or a headache. This is actually a good sign. Having side effects means the vaccine is working to teach your body to fight the virus. Side effects are more common after the second dose of these vaccines and should go away in a few days. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions.

What happens if I miss the date of my 2nd dose?

You should get your second shot as close to the recommended 3-week or 4-week interval as possible. But if you miss that window of time, the CDC says you should get your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines as soon as possible. Also, you do not have to restart the vaccine series. And you should not get the second dose early. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions.

What about the risk of myocarditis in teens?

The CDC is closely monitoring that some young adults are developing myocarditis—inflammation in the heart muscle—after receiving the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. These reports are rare (approximately 12.6 cases per 1 million people vaccinated in the 12 to 39 age group). Those who received care responded well to standard anti-inflammatory treatment. The COVID-19 vaccine is still highly recommended for everyone 12 years and older, as the protection it offers far outweighs this rare and treatable risk.

Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

YES. The CDC has recommended that pregnant women get a COVID-19 vaccine after research showed that the vaccine does not pose additional risks for mothers or babies. In addition, the CDC has stated the COVID-19 vaccines pose no risk for breastfeeding women or their babies. In fact, studies have shown that the COVID-19 vaccine provides protection to infants through breast milk.

VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS

Do the vaccines work differently for men or women, or people of different ages or races?

NO. The studies have shown that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and work for all adults no matter their age, race or if they are a man or a woman. Some studies have shown that older people can have fewer side effects from the vaccines than younger people.

What is the Delta variant and do the COVID-19 vaccines protect me?

YES, those who are fully vaccinated are protected against variants—even if they were inoculated before Delta and other variants appeared. The Delta variant is a strain of coronavirus that exposes victims to a heavier viral load that affects their airways and can be more easily spread to others with minimal exposure.

How long does it take for the vaccine to work?

ABOUT 2 WEEKS. It takes about 2 weeks after your final dose of COVID-19 vaccine to be fully protected. In the meantime, take precautions like wearing your mask, social distancing and hand washing.

Do I need a booster shot?

RESEARCH is telling doctors that we may benefit from a booster shot. This would help "boost" the levels of antibodies in our bodies to fight COVID-19 and its variants more effectively in case we are exposed to the virus.
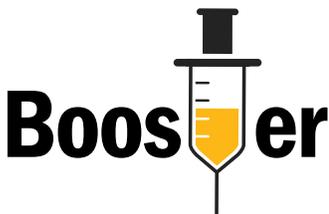
When should I get the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot?

RECOMMEND: The CDC and FDA are looking into this question and will give healthcare providers and the public recommendations on the timing for booster shots soon. Memorial Hermann will be ready to help you obtain your booster shot when its time.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, visit www.memorialhermann.org/shotofhope or www.cdc.gov.

MEMORIAL HERMANN®