1. **What is the delta variant? Who is at most risk for infection from the delta variant? (NEW)**

Viruses reproduce by making copies of themselves. Each copy is different from the original virus and called a mutation. The “delta variant” is a mutation of the virus that causes COVID-19. This variant is more contagious than other versions of the virus. It may also cause more severe illness.

People who are not vaccinated are at a much greater risk of being infected with COVID-19.

2. **Will the current vaccines work for new strains of the virus?**

Maybe. Many experts believe that the COVID-19 vaccines will protect against some of the new strains. But, it is also possible that the vaccines will be less effective against some new strains. Some vaccines work for a long time, like that measles vaccine. Other vaccines work for shorter times and need to be updated, like the flu vaccine. It is too early to know in the case of COVID-19.

Regardless, it is still very important to get the current vaccine. The pandemic is still spreading. The more people who get vaccinated, the faster we can get the pandemic under control.

3. **Why is it important to take the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The vaccine will help keep you from getting sick from COVID-19. It will also help us end the pandemic faster.

COVID-19 is a very serious and contagious disease. It killed approximately 350,000 Americans in 2020. By comparison, the seasonal flu killed 34,000 Americans in 2019. If you take the vaccine, you will help keep yourself and others safe from COVID-19.

4. **How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?**

The vaccine works by helping your body recognize the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease. Once your body knows what the virus looks like, your body’s defense system can then fight the virus.
5. Tell me more. How do vaccines protect you from viruses?

Your body naturally makes antibodies to fight harmful viruses that enter your body. However, the antibodies need to know which viruses to fight. A new virus can enter your body without being recognized by the antibodies. If this happens, the virus can attack before your body can fight back. A vaccine trains your body to quickly recognize the harmful virus, and make antibodies to fight it. None of the vaccines contain any live virus so you do not have to worry about getting COVID-19.

6. Should I get the vaccine for COVID-19?

We encourage everyone who is eligible to get the vaccine. Anyone 12 years or older can receive the vaccine in the U.S. Check regularly with your local government health agency or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the latest updates.

However, you should check with your doctor if you are pregnant. And you should not get the vaccine if you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you have a history of allergic reactions or have questions.

7. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves vaccines only after they are found to be safe and effective. In order for a vaccine to be approved, scientists test each new vaccine with many people to make sure they are safe and effective.

Over 40,000 Americans were tested with the Pfizer vaccine, 30,000 were tested with the Moderna vaccine, and 39,000 tested with Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine. These tests showed that these vaccines are safe and effective. For this reason, the FDA has approved the vaccines made by Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson, beginning with emergency use. More vaccines are being reviewed for approval and may be available in the future.

8. If the vaccine was approved so quickly, how can it be safe?

Each new vaccine is tested for safety and effectiveness. This is even true for Operation Warp Speed which sped up the testing of the vaccine. However, even though testing was faster, the vaccine went through all of the normal steps to make sure it was safe.

The testing of vaccines goes through three major phases (Phase I, Phase II, Phase III clinical trials). In Phase I, doctors give the vaccine to volunteers. This research gives information about how much vaccine to give, and an initial idea about the vaccine’s safety. In Phase I, only a small number of people get the vaccine because it is so new. If the vaccine appears safe, it then gets tested further in Phase II.

In Phase II, the vaccine is tested to see how well it works, and to look for side effects. If the vaccine appears safe and effective, it goes into Phase III.

In Phase III, the vaccine is given to over 30,000 people to get more detailed information about the vaccine’s effectiveness and safety in a diverse population.

Normally, these three phases take many years. This is because it takes time to secure the funding to test the vaccines, file paperwork, and recruit volunteers. Warp Speed helped make the research go faster by providing funding and making the paperwork faster. Thus, the COVID-19 vaccines have been tested across the three Phases and shown to be safe and effective.
9. When can I get my vaccine? How can I get it?

Each state, county and city has its own procedure for giving the vaccine. You can ask your doctor, employer, or local health department. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a website that can help you find your local health department.


10. There are many rumors and myths about the vaccine. Where can I go to get truthful, accurate information?

The best source of accurate information is your doctor or the website of a U.S. government health agency like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or a state or local county health department.

11. Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The FDA approved vaccines will not give you the coronavirus (also known as SARS-CoV2) because they do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.

12. Will the vaccine implant a microchip into my body? Will the vaccine cause a miscarriage or make me sterile? Will it alter my DNA?

No. These ideas are not true.

13. What are common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

The authorized vaccines can produce side effects in some people. This is normal. Common side effects include:

- Pain where you got the shot, as well as in other muscles and joints
- Fatigue
- Mild fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Nausea
- Muscle pain

The side effects are mild, but often more noticeable after the second shot. Most side effects disappear after 1-2 days. Talk to your doctor if your symptoms get worse or do not go away after a few days. There is a chance that you may be allergic to the vaccine. If you have a history of allergic reactions, talk to your doctor before getting the vaccination.
14. If I have already had COVID-19, should I still be vaccinated?

Yes. Doctors recommend getting the vaccine even if you've already gotten COVID-19. There are some reports of people who have gotten sick from COVID-19 and then got sick again later from COVID-19.

15. Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Maybe. Currently, it seems that the vaccine is safe for pregnant women, but we do not know for sure. There isn't enough research yet, although we may know in the future.

Consult with your doctor. Both the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists say it is a personal choice. You can go to their websites for more information.


16. How effective is the vaccine?

The vaccines developed by Moderna and Pfizer are about 95% effective in preventing people from getting sick with COVID-19. This means that your chances of getting COVID-19 are about 95% lower if you got the vaccine than if you never got the vaccine. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine is 66% effective, which is still very good. For comparison, the influenza (flu) vaccine is usually 40-60% effective.

There is still a small chance that you can get COVID-19 even if you were vaccinated. But you should take the vaccine because it greatly lowers your chance of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19. You should still wear masks, wash your hands frequently and practice social distancing as recommended under the latest guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

17. Can my children (under age 12) get the vaccine?

Scientists are studying the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines for younger children right now. Check regularly with your local government health agency or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the latest updates.

18. What vaccines are available in the United States?

Right now, there are three COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. They are made by Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen.
19. What is safe to do now that I’m vaccinated?

You need to wait 2 weeks after your final vaccine shot before you are considered “fully vaccinated.” For the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, you are fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second shot. For the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, you are fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your first (and only) shot.

If you are fully vaccinated, you can do things such as:

- Be indoors with a few other fully vaccinated people. You can be closer than 6 feet. You don't need to wear a mask.

- Be indoors with a small group of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from different households. You can be closer than 6 feet and you don't need to wear a mask. The exception is if those people have health problems that make them likely to be very sick from COVID-19. In that case, you should wear a mask and practice social distancing to keep them safe, even if you are already vaccinated.

- Be outdoors without a mask, unless it is very crowded. If it is crowded, please do wear a mask and try to stay 6 feet apart from others.

Even if you have been vaccinated, you should wear a mask when near large groups of people. And you need to follow local rules for businesses, schools, and the workplace.

For up-to-date information from CDC visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html

20. What are the long-term effects of the COVID-19 virus?

COVID-19 can cause problems even after you have recovered from it. These long-term problems include:

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Cough
- Joint pain
- Chest pain
- Memory, concentration or sleep problems
- Muscle pain or headache
- Fast or pounding heartbeat
- Loss of smell or taste
- Depression or anxiety
- Fever
- Dizziness when you stand

Though long-term symptoms are not common, they can affect even healthy people and can affect people who had mild or no symptoms from COVID-19. Avoiding this risk is an important reason to get vaccinated.
21. Who was included in the clinical trials?

The COVID-19 clinical trials included people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the vaccines were found to be safe and effective for all backgrounds of people.

22. Where can I get answers to other vaccine questions?

You can check the CDC’s website here:

For more information, please visit: www.TranslateCovid.org