COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Yes, all the COVID-19 vaccines approved or authorized for emergency use in the United States are safe, effective, and your greatest protection against the virus.

All the vaccines available are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. All our state and federal medical experts agree, and strongly encourage everyone eligible to get their COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they can.

- The COVID-19 vaccines are held to the **same rigorous safety and effectiveness standards** as all other types of vaccines in the United States. No corners were cut.

- Each vaccine had three rounds of clinical trials **with tens of thousands of participants** of a diverse range of race, age, and other demographics.

- After the vaccine is authorized, multiple **safety systems** at the FDA and the CDC constantly monitor for adverse events. If an adverse event is found, it is immediately investigated to determine if it poses a true health issue, and public recommendations are made if necessary.

- Researchers got a head start on developing a vaccine because the virus that causes COVID-19 is like other existing viruses that have been studied extensively for more than a decade.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine give you COVID?

No, the COVID-19 vaccine <u>cannot</u> give you COVID.

None of the vaccines contain anything that can cause the disease. In fact, **the vaccine is your best protection against COVID-19.** Vaccines safely increase your body's natural ability to fight the virus before the virus attacks you. Sometimes that can cause minor symptoms including a sore arm, fever, or chills. But those symptoms only last a day or two and temporary side effects can be a sign that the vaccine is working. Remember, millions of New Yorkers, Americans, and people all over the world have received the vaccine already.

What are the risks of *not* getting vaccinated?

The vaccines are extremely effective at preventing serious illness, including hospitalization and death, from COVID-19. Not being vaccinated against COVID-19 puts you at greater risk of these severe outcomes. Another risk of not being vaccinated is the increased likelihood of passing on the virus to others, including family members and people who may have other medical conditions.

- Hundreds of thousands of Americans have died due to COVID-19. Many more have been hospitalized.

- Even people who recover from COVID-19 may suffer from long-term symptoms that can be serious and affect your quality of life.

- According to the CDC, 97% of pregnant people hospitalized for COVID-19 were unvaccinated.

- Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent serious outcomes.

Is the vaccine free?
The vaccines are free to everyone, even if you don't have health insurance.

Who is currently eligible to get the vaccine?
All New Yorkers 5 or older are eligible and encouraged to get a vaccine as soon as they're able.

Do COVID-19 vaccines work against "variants of concern" of the virus, including the Delta variant?
All COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use in the United States have proven extremely effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19, including against the Delta variant.

The effectiveness of the FDA-approved vaccines remains strong even against newer strains, including against variants of concern such as the Delta variant. People who are unvaccinated have the greatest risk of becoming seriously ill, which is why the New York State Department of Health urges all eligible New Yorkers to get vaccinated as soon as they are able.

Is it better to get natural immunity to COVID-19, rather than immunity from a vaccine?
No. While you may have some short-term immunity after recovering from COVID-19, we don't yet know how long this protection lasts.

Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses or even die, and others have symptoms that last for months and affect their quality of life. Sometimes this is called "Long COVID." The vaccine dramatically reduces the chances of these serious consequences.

Where can I sign-up to get the vaccine?
Visit the Westchester County Department of Health's website at www.westchestergov.com/health for information about our vaccine clinics. You can also visit www.vaccines.gov, text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.