



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Tuscarawas County Health Department

FAQ on the COVID-19 Vaccine

Currently based **primarily** on the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

What you should know about the COVID-19 Vaccine:

1. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for me to get?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine can help boost your immunity against the virus and can protect others around you. This vaccine has completed the normal process and safety protocols of the U.S. vaccine safety system. Tens of thousands of people were given the vaccine in clinical trial studies. This helped to ensure safety standards and protect those of various ages, races, and ethnicities. That data was given to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine safety and effectiveness. No shortcuts were given to this vaccine development and approval process.

2. Can I develop COVID-19 symptoms from the vaccine?

No, the vaccine cannot give you COVID-19. That is because it does not include the live virus. It may take your body a few weeks to build immunity after receiving the vaccination. There are regular side effects that could be experienced by those who receive the vaccine. They are a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This is a sign that your body is building immunity to the virus and this is normal. If you do develop symptoms of COVID-19, you could have been exposed before or right after receiving the vaccine. You should follow guidelines from your local health department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Those who choose to receive the vaccine, will need to take two doses: one for the immune system to recognize the virus and the other to strengthen the immune response. These will likely be given several weeks apart and are needed for ultimate protection.

3. Should I isolate from others in my home if I get the vaccine before them?

No. You will not have to isolate if you receive the vaccine because it does not include the live virus. Experiencing side effects from this or any other vaccine is a normal occurrence due to immune response from the body. If you develop any of the symptoms of COVID-19, you should follow up with a health care provider or a community health clinic and begin isolating away from others.

4. Why do I still need to take COVID-19 precautions, like wearing a mask, after receiving the vaccine?

You will still need to take the regular precautions recommended by your local health department and the CDC. This is to both ensure that the vaccine has time to build immunity in your body and that you continue to protect yourself from risk of getting the virus. No vaccine of any kind is 100% protective. It will still be critically important to follow standard COVID-19 precautions such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing even after we have a vaccine. Everyone looks forward to a return to normal. Vaccination is part of that, but we must remain vigilant until we achieve a high rate of vaccination in the general population. Precautions can only be scaled back when a majority of the community is eventually vaccinated with both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

5. Should minorities be skeptical of this vaccine?

No. Minority persons should not be skeptical of this vaccine because it has met all of the federal guidelines needed to approve vaccines. Given the unfortunate history and treatment of minority health, it is understandable that there would be skepticism. Health collaboratives, like the Black Coalition Against COVID, are hoping to inspire minority populations to regain trust in the healthcare system and to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Information is forthcoming and updates will be made to this document. Credit: The Stark County Health Dept. | 12/17/2020



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6. Is the vaccine safe for pregnant women or women that are breastfeeding?

Yes. It is believed at present time that there is not a safety risk for pregnant women who receive the vaccine. Due to the potential risks caused by COVID-19, pregnant women should be offered the vaccine to strengthen their immune system. There are currently ongoing studies to determine the best course of action for pregnant women receiving this vaccine. Ultimately, the decision should be between the woman and her health care provider.

In regards to women who are currently breastfeeding, there are no theoretical risks from the COVID-19 vaccine. Again, there are ongoing studies to further provide understanding on the impact of the vaccine on pregnant and breastfeeding women.

7. Will children be receiving the vaccine?

Not at this time. The emergency use authorization (EUA) was only given for children 16 years of age and older for the Pfizer vaccine and 18 years of age and older for the Moderna vaccine. Additional studies looking at vaccine safety and effectiveness in children are coming soon.

8. Is natural immunity from COVID-19 better than immunity from the COVID-19 vaccine?

No. There is short-term antibody protection after someone has had the virus but the duration of the protection is unknown. Receiving the vaccine is the best and safest way to boost the immune system.

9. If I have received the flu shot, will I still be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine is perfectly safe to take even if you have already received the vaccine for the seasonal flu. It is recommended that you do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine within 14 days of the flu or any other vaccine. Experiencing side effects from any vaccine is normal because your body may have an immune response. If you do feel the identified symptoms of either COVID-19 or the seasonal flu, you should follow up with a health care provider or a community health clinic.

10. When will the general public receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Currently, the planning for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine is underway for individuals in a phased system. Those receiving the vaccine, in Phase 1, include frontline health workers, EMS responders, staff and residents at long term care facilities, etc. with the general public expected to receive the vaccine in Phases 3-4. The timing of the distribution to the general public will be announced at a later date by Gov. DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health.

Important definitions to remember:

- **Side effects:** A health problem shown by studies to be caused by a vaccine. - CDC.gov
- **Symptoms:** A physical or mental problem that a person experiences that may indicate a disease or condition. - Cancer.gov

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