

Fact vs. Myth: COVID-19 Vaccine Edition

MYTH: You can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

FACT: None of the vaccines currently in development in the United States use a live COVID-19 virus. This means there is nothing in the vaccine that can cause an infection. When your body responds to the vaccine, you may have a fever or other symptoms. This is NOT an infection, but your immune system working to protect your body against future infection.

MYTH: The vaccine will make me test positive for COVID-19.

FACT: None of the vaccines in development will make you test positive for a viral COVID-19 test. These are the tests that can tell if you have a current COVID-19 infection. If your body develops an immune response from the vaccine, you may test positive on an antibody test. These tests show if you have a previous infection and may have protection against the virus in the future.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccine will change my DNA.

FACT: mRNA from a vaccine will never interact with your DNA in any way. Your cells use mRNA as a template to build proteins outside of the cell nucleus where all your DNA is stored. A mRNA vaccine delivers instructions to your cell to make a harmless virus protein to tell your immune system to activate but will never enter the cell's nucleus. Once the protein is made, the vaccine mRNA is broken down by the cell. It is like when you send a picture in SnapChat, once the message is received and viewed, it disappears.

MYTH: Side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine are worse than the infection.

FACT: If you are infected with COVID-19, there is no way to know how bad your symptoms will be. If symptoms become severe, it may result in hospitalization or even death. Sometimes symptoms of a COVID-19 infection can last up to 3 months. To date, over 1.5 million people worldwide have died from COVID-19. Side effects may occur from the COVID-19 vaccine and may be like symptoms of a mild COVID-19 infection. These include headache, muscle ache, and fever and get better in a day or so. For most people symptoms of COVID-19 will be worse and last longer than side effects from the vaccine.

Resources: 1. CDC [Internet]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines; 2020 Nov 23 [cited 2020 Dec 2]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html>.

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