



COVID-19 Vaccine Myth Busters

Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe because it was developed so quickly.

Fact: The vaccines are proven to be safe and effective. Although they were developed in record time, they have gone through the same rigorous approval process as any other vaccine and meet all safety standards. No steps were skipped.

Myth: The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will alter my DNA.

Fact: No vaccines alter your DNA. These types of vaccines contain messenger RNA (mRNA) which instructs cells to make the “spike protein” found on the new coronavirus. When the immune system recognizes this protein, it builds an immune response by creating antibodies, which teaches the body how to protect against future infection. The mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. The body gets rid of the mRNA after it’s finished using the instructions.

Myth: I can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Fact: You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine because the vaccine does not contain the live virus.

Myth: You only need the first dose of the vaccine to be protected.

Fact: You do receive protection after one dose, but currently authorized vaccines require two doses. The first shot helps the immune system recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response. You will need both doses for the best protection.

Myth: It is better to get natural immunity to COVID-19 rather than immunity from a vaccine. If I get COVID-19, I don’t need to get vaccinated.

Fact: While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don’t know how long this protection lasts so it is still recommended that you get a vaccine even after having had COVID-19. Vaccination is the best and safest protection.

Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine has severe side effects and can be fatal.

Fact: You may have side effects similar to those experienced with other vaccines, including muscle pain, chills and headache, but the vast majority are very short term. Severe allergic reactions are extremely rare. These vaccines have been proven to prevent serious illness and death from COVID-19, and once herd immunity is achieved (70% population is vaccinated) will also protect those around you.

Myth: Vaccines cause blood clots.

Fact: Blood clots presumably caused by the vaccine are extremely rare (4 cases in 1,000,000 Astra-Zeneca vaccine doses, or .0004%). However, if you contract COVID-19 there is a 165,000 in a million or (16.5%) chance of developing a blood clot. There is a higher risk of blood clots from the birth control pill (500-1200 in 1,000,000 or 0.05% to 0.12%) or smoking (1,763 in 1,000,000 or 0.18%).

Myth: The vaccine only gives me effective protection for 6 months.

Fact: Real-life studies show very good immunity six months after vaccination, and it likely lasts much longer, we just don’t have further evidence yet because we have not been vaccinating long enough to have data beyond the six month period.

Myth: I am pregnant/breastfeeding so I shouldn’t get the vaccine.

Fact: The initial data recommended that pregnant women not get the vaccine as the risk was unknown, however now that we have real-world data and studies involving pregnant women, we know that pregnant women have a higher risk for severe disease or pre-term delivery if they contract COVID-19 without any known increased risk associated with the vaccine.

Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine causes infertility.

Fact: No, the vaccine does not cause infertility. It is recommended that women who are trying to get pregnant get the vaccine as soon as possible so they are protected, and their baby will be protected as well, through the antibodies shared by the mother.

Myth: Once I receive the COVID-19 vaccine, I no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance from people.

Fact: Masking, handwashing and physical distancing remain necessary in public until a sufficient number of people are immune. We are not yet there in Canada.

Myth: People with underlying conditions shouldn’t get the vaccine.

Fact: People who have underlying conditions – like diabetes and heart disease, for example – are at a high risk for getting complications from COVID-19, so it’s even more important they get vaccinated.

Myth: Some vaccines are better than others.

Fact: The best vaccine to get is the first one offered to you. All approved COVID-19 vaccines are an excellent choice to keep yourself and others safe.