

## Fact Sheet: Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccine

### **What kind of COVID-19 vaccine is being developed?**

Both Pfizer and Moderna are developing an mRNA vaccine. They do NOT contain COVID-19 virus.

### **What is a mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines?**

- mRNA technology is new in vaccine production but is already being used in cancer treatment. It has been studied for more than ten years.
- COVID-19 mRNA vaccines give instructions for our cells to make a **harmless piece** that looks like the “spike protein.” The spike protein is found on the surface of the COVID-19 virus.
- Our bodies recognize that this protein should not be there, so they build antibodies that will remember how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if we are infected in the future.

### **Can mRNA vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No

### **Can mRNA vaccine change my DNA?**

No

### **What is the efficacy of the vaccine?**

Pfizer: 95% protection from having an infection

Moderna: 94.1% protection from having an infection

### **What are some of the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

- You can expect to have short-term discomfort: fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and pain at injection site after vaccination
- These reactions will last for 24-48 hours and are typically more pronounced after the second dose
- Side effects mean your body is doing its job and making antibodies (IT IS A GOOD THING). These side effects are normal, common and expected.

## What are some of the safety techniques that were put into place in developing and distributing the vaccine?

- Safety is the most important priority in vaccine approval
- Most side effects occur within 6 weeks of vaccination. To be more cautious, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) requires 8 weeks of safety monitoring of the COVID-19 vaccines
- Monitoring for safety will continue as the vaccine is distributed to the public
- To assess safety FDA typically advises that a minimum of 3,000 participants are included in the trial. The current COVID-19 vaccine trials include 30,000 to 50,000 participants

## How was the vaccine developed so quickly?

Major reasons we were able to get these vaccines developed more quickly than usual include:

- Global effort with the world's leading scientists focused on a single task
- Nearly unlimited resources (money, knowledge, manpower, technology)
- A large pool of diverse adult volunteer trial participants

## What can I expect when I take the vaccine?

- Most of the vaccines are **2 doses**, 3-4 weeks apart
- Protection occurs **1-2 weeks after the second dose**
- We will most likely not know how long the vaccine will be protective once we receive it. We will know more as more time passes in the current research
- May need to have vaccine shots for COVID-19 on a regular basis (like the flu shot)

It is important to get information from reliable sources. Here are some links to information:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations/answering-questions.html>
- CDC: About COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines.html>
- CDC: Provider Resources for COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations with Patients and Answering Patients' Questions: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations>