

GET THE VAX FACTS

COVID-19 has up-ended our lives the last 14 months. The sad truth is - many have died and lost loved ones, and many are struggling with significant long-term effects of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

We're all in this together, and we must work together to move forward. We know as more people are vaccinated, we improve our odds of preventing future outbreaks and lockdowns.

Even if your individual risk is low, by choosing to get vaccinated, you are protecting not only yourself and your family, but you are also making the community safer for everyone, including those currently unable to get the vaccine.

It's normal to ask questions about medical interventions, and there are answers and resources available to help you choose whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccination.

WERE VACCINES DEVELOPED TOO QUICKLY?

The COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have gone through the same rigorous steps and requirements as every other vaccine, meeting all safety standards. The vaccines were developed more rapidly due to a number of factors including a high number of volunteers to receive the vaccine during trials, high rates of illness from COVID-19 allowing fast and ample data collection, and high levels of funding and resources.

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE COVID-19 VACCINE TRIALS?

The phase 3 Pfizer vaccine trials involved over 43,000 people aged 12 and older from a diverse range of volunteers. Experts agree the COVID-19 vaccines are safe for all groups tested, including pregnant and nursing mothers and women who plan to have children. Pfizer has been approved for emergency use by the FDA for children 12-15 years old and is expecting to seek approval for children 2-11 years of age by September 2021.

WILL THE VACCINE MAKE ME SICK?

Getting the vaccine is safer than getting COVID-19. Severe COVID-19 illness can be very dangerous and even deadly for people of all ages, including children. COVID-19 symptoms can last weeks or months. Researchers still do not know why some people experience long term, continuing symptoms and it is happening to people of all ages, and to healthy people as well as people with underlying medical conditions.

WHAT SIDE EFFECTS CAN I EXPECT IF I GET VACCINATED?

Most side effects are mild. Many people experience some fatigue, a sore arm, and some experience a headache. Most people report the side effects last less than a day and most continue with their daily routines and do not feel sick enough to stay home.

HAVE THERE BEEN SEVERE SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN VACCINATED?

Adverse reactions are extremely rare, even among people in Santa Barbara County. The CDC reports, during December 2020 there were 21 cases of severe allergic reactions out of 1,893,360 first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. That's a rate of 11 per one million doses. 71% of these occurred within 15 minutes of vaccination.

IS THERE ANY HARM IN DELAYING GETTING VACCINATED?

Delaying vaccination allows the virus to continue spreading in the community, providing ample opportunity for the virus to evolve into new variants which can reduce or completely evade the protection of the vaccines.

WHY ARE VACCINES NEEDED? WILL COVID-19 GO AWAY WITHOUT VACCINES?

We are vaccinated early in our lives against many serious diseases including polio, mumps, rubella, and measles. Vaccinations are the primary reason we no longer see widespread outbreaks of these diseases. The fastest and only way to eliminate the threat of a virus like COVID-19 is through vaccination.

ASK QUESTIONS

- Reach out to the County Call Center by calling 2-1-1, selecting your preferred language, and then selecting option 4
- Visit the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department website at publichealthsb.org.
- Get information from cdc.gov and covid19.ca.gov.
- Talk to a trusted medical professional.