

Community Weeklies
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Myths Pt 2
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COVID-19 vaccines offer us the promise of a rescue from this global pandemic. Vaccines, along with safety measures such as masking and physical distancing, will help us return to the normal interactions we have missed for so long. In the second of a two-part series, we'll explore a few more myths you may have heard, and the facts behind each one:

Myth #1 The vaccine can make me test positive for COVID-19 disease.

There are three types of tests for COVID-19 disease. Two of them can be used to test for an acute infection because they test for the presence of the virus or its proteins (PCR and antigen). The vaccines cannot cause you to test positive on a PCR or rapid antigen test. A third test measures antibodies to see if you have some immunity to the virus. This test should not be used to determine if someone has an acute infection. Once you receive a vaccine and your body has had a chance to develop antibodies, there is a possibility that you may test positive on some antibody tests. Scientists are still studying how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

Myth #2 The vaccine will alter my DNA or cause cancer.

The vaccines do not interact with your DNA in any way. Because the vaccines do not alter or interact with your DNA, it is not possible for the vaccine to cause cancer.

Myth #3 The vaccine causes infertility.

The fact is that no loss of fertility has been reported among the tens of thousands in the clinical trials, or among the millions who have received vaccines since then. This myth may have arisen from false early reports in Europe.

Myth #4 I don't need the vaccine since I have had COVID-19.

We encourage everyone to take the COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of whether they have had the virus. After you have been sick with COVID-19, we don't know how long natural immunity lasts. Based on studies on the immune response to the vaccines and to natural infection, it appears that the vaccine will give you a stronger immunity than you otherwise would have if you have been infected with the virus.

Myth #5 If we still have to wear masks, the vaccines must not be very effective.

Although the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at decreasing the risk of severe disease (including hospitalizations and death) associated with the virus, no vaccine is 100% effective in preventing infection. In addition, it takes time for your immune system to offer full protection. It is

important for everyone to continue physical distancing and wearing a mask in public until the level of COVID-19 disease activity significantly decreases.

These myths about COVID-19 vaccines may discourage some people from getting vaccinated. The more we spread facts, rather than myths, the more our vaccine rates will increase and the faster we will be able to end this pandemic. It is heartening that polls show that public acceptance of vaccines continues to increase: do your part- get vaccinated and make sure your loved ones can separate facts from fiction. If you have questions about whether a COVID-19 vaccine is right for you, please reach out to your doctor to talk about your concerns.