

COVID-19 VACCINES AND BOOSTERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

COVID-19 VACCINATION IS A SAFER WAY TO BUILD PROTECTION

Getting the virus that causes COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as an antibody or immunity. However, experts don't know how long this protection lasts.

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by building immunity without the risk of severe illness.

1. WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19?

The vaccine will help to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19. If you still become infected, being vaccinated can help to prevent severe illness or death. You may also reduce the chances of spreading the virus to people around you by being vaccinated.

2. I HEAR THAT THERE ARE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE COVID-19 VACCINE, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THEM?

The COVID-19 shot may cause side effects in some people. Common side effects include pain at the injection site, redness, and swelling on the arm where you got the injection. Fever, chills, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, and nausea are also common side effects. Side effects should go away in a few days.

Ask the healthcare professional, doctor, or nurse for help if:

- The redness or pain in the arm gets worse after 24 hours
- Your side effects are worrying you
- Your side effects do not seem to be going away after a few days

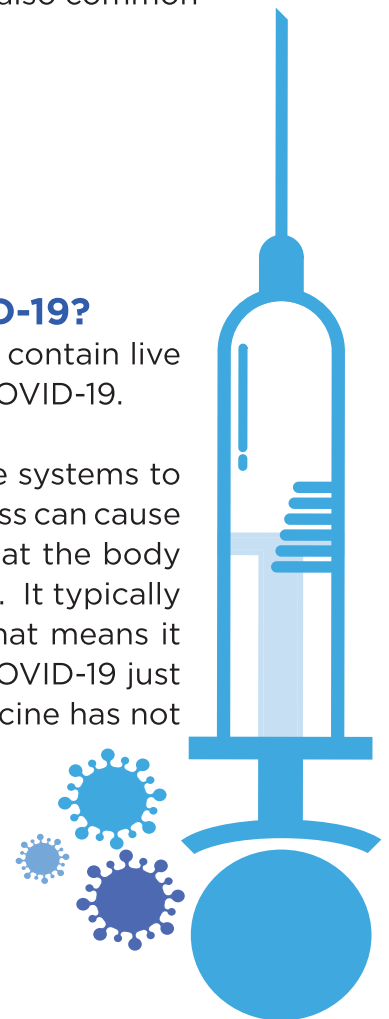
3. CAN A COVID-19 VACCINE MAKE ME SICK WITH COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines authorised by the WHO or the FDA contain live virus. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

There are several different types of vaccines. They all teach our immune systems to recognise and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms such as fever. These symptoms are typical and are a sign that the body is building immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19). It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it is possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

4. AFTER GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE, WILL I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 ON A VIRAL TEST (PCR)?

No. Neither the recently authorised and recommended vaccines nor the other COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials cause you to



test positive on viral tests used to see if you have a current infection.

When you get vaccinated, you should develop an immune response. In some cases, this may result in you testing positive on some antibody tests. However, if this happens, the lab would be able to determine if it is a response to the vaccine or an actual case of COVID-19.

5. IF I ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED WITH A COVID-19 VACCINE?

Yes, it would help if you were vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible that you could become infected with the virus again. After an infection of COVID-19, the vaccine can be given as soon as persons have no other symptoms or fulfill Isolation requirements.

If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

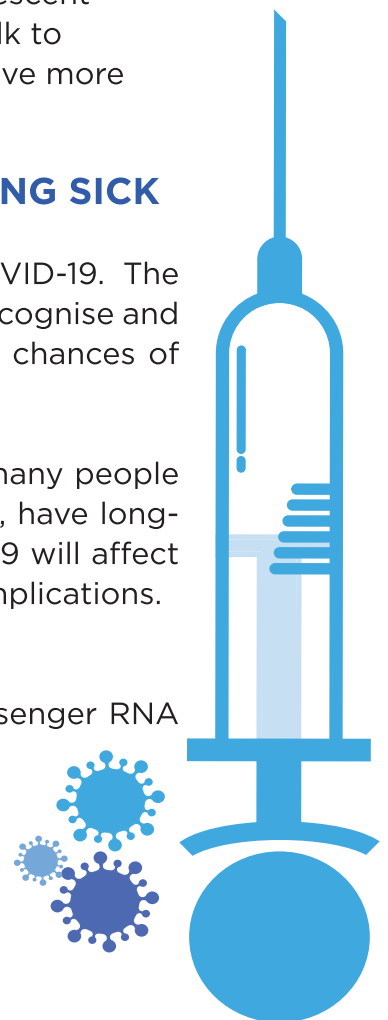
6. WILL A COVID-19 VACCINE PROTECT ME FROM GETTING SICK WITH COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccine can reduce your risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccination works by teaching your immune system how to recognise and fight the virus that causes COVID-19, which significantly reduces your chances of severe illness with COVID-19.

Being protected from becoming severely ill is essential. Even though many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness, have long-term health effects, or even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you do not have an increased risk of developing severe complications.

7. WILL COVID-19 VACCINE ALTER MY DNA?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA. Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines are the first COVID-19 vaccines authorised for use in the United States. These vaccines teach our cells to make a protein that triggers an immune response. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the cell's nucleus, where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to



safely develop immunity to disease.

8. IS IT SAFE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE IF I HAVE AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is essential for people with underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to become severely ill from COVID-19. However, you can also speak with your doctor or visit your nearest polyclinic to consult a doctor about your specific case.

9. SHOULD MY CHILD GET VACCINATED?

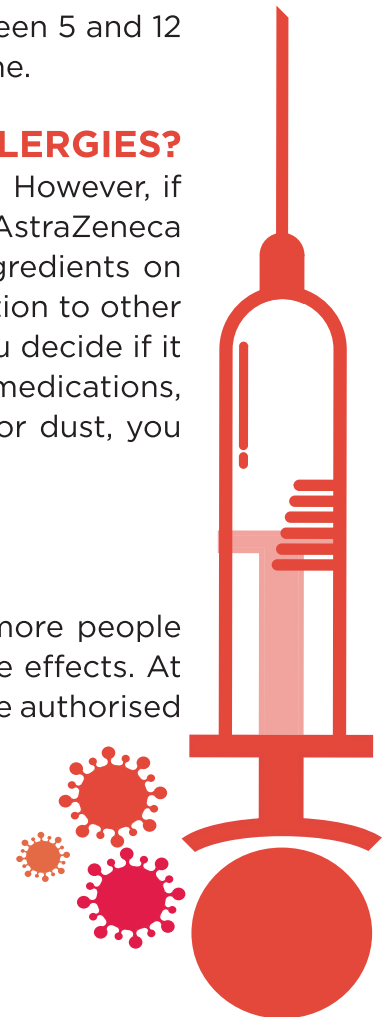
COVID-19 vaccination can help protect your child from becoming severely ill with COVID-19. Although fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 than adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and spread the virus to others. Getting your child vaccinated helps protect your child and your family from becoming severely ill if they become infected with COVID-19. Vaccination is now recommended for everyone five years and older. There is a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Paediatric Vaccine, the only one available for children between 5 and 12 years old. The older children can only have the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

10. IS IT SAFE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE IF I HAVE ALLERGIES?

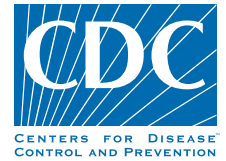
It is safe for most people with allergies to get the COVID-19 Vaccine. However, if you have an allergy to a component of the mRNA, you can be offered AstraZeneca or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. You can find the list of ingredients on the CDC's website. Suppose you have had an immediate allergic reaction to other vaccines or injectable therapies. In that case, your doctor can help you decide if it is safe for you to get vaccinated. If you have severe allergies to oral medications, food, pets, insect stings, latex, or environmental irritants like pollen or dust, you may still get vaccinated.

11. ARE THERE LONG-TERM SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Because all COVID-19 vaccines are new, it will take more time and more people getting vaccinated to learn about very rare or possible long-term side effects. At least 8-weeks of safety data were gathered in the clinical trials for all the authorised vaccines, and it is unusual for vaccine side effects to appear more than eight weeks after vaccination.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



12. WHY DO I NEED TWO COVID-19 SHOTS?

The first shot helps the immune system recognise the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response. You need both to get the best protection that lasts the longest.

13. DO I HAVE TO CONTINUE TO WEAR A MASK AND AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH OTHERS AFTER I HAVE BEEN VACCINATED?

Yes, it is essential to cover your mouth and nose with a mask, wash hands often, and stay at the nationally recommended distance away from others even after being vaccinated. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before giving the ok to stop non-pharmaceutical interventions after vaccination.

14. HOW DO I KNOW IF THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS SAFE?

All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to ensure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. These trials were very similar to trials done for other licensed vaccines but were done more quickly due to the urgent need to reduce illnesses during the pandemic. International public health experts will keep monitoring the vaccines to look for safety issues after they are authorised and in use.

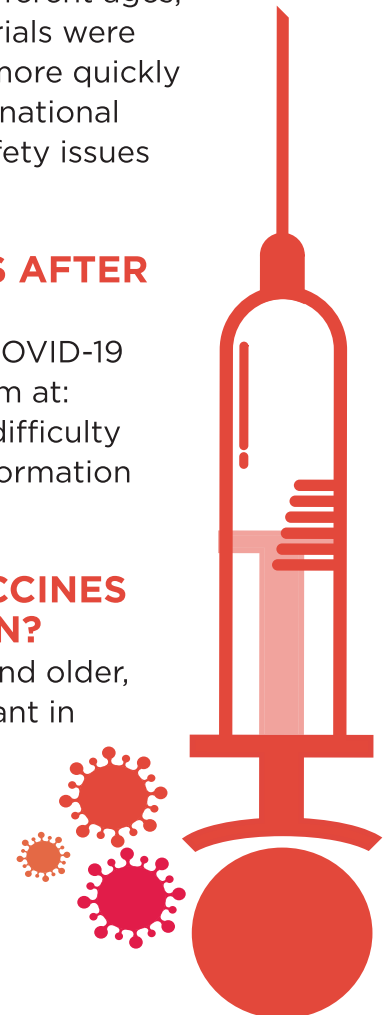
15. HOW DO I REPORT PROBLEMS OR BAD REACTIONS AFTER GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE?

You can visit a medical clinic or doctor near to you, you can call the COVID-19 Hotline at 246-536-3800, or you can complete the Self-reporting Form at: <https://barbados.seamlessdocs.co./f/covid19sideeffects>. If you have difficulty uploading the form, you can call the Barbados Drug Service, Drug Information Centre at 246-535-4300.

16. IS THERE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON FERTILITY IN WOMEN OR MEN?

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone 12 years of age and older, including people trying to get pregnant now or might become pregnant in the future and their partners. Currently, no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19, cause women or men fertility problems.

If you get pregnant after receiving your first shot of a two-dose



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COVID-19 vaccine, you should get your second dose to get as much protection as possible.

17. ARE THERE ANY HARMFUL INGREDIENTS IN THE VACCINES?

Vaccine ingredients vary by manufacturer. None of the vaccines contain eggs, gelatin, latex, or preservatives. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys. They are also free from manufactured products like microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes, or nanowire semiconductors. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at your injection site.

18. DO COVID-19 VACCINES CONTAIN MICROCHIPS?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips. Vaccines are developed to fight against disease and are not administered to track your movement. Vaccines work by stimulating your immune system to produce antibodies, precisely as they would if exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease without getting the disease first.

19. WHAT IS A BOOSTER SHOT?

Although the COVID-19 vaccines continue to work very well at preventing severe illness, hospitalisation, and death, a booster shot is an extra dose that helps keep up or boost your protection after the immunity has started to wane.

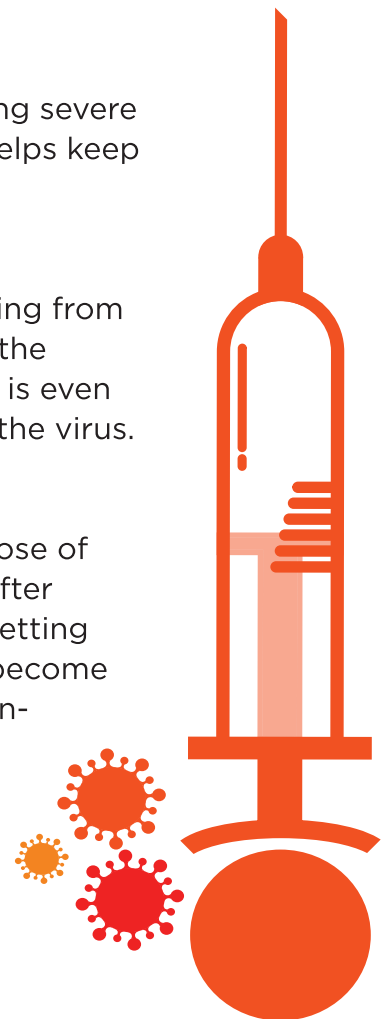
20. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A BOOSTER DOSE?

COVID-19 vaccines help protect you against becoming severely ill or dying from the virus. A booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine will help ensure that the protection from the first two doses (or the one dose in the case of J&J) is even more robust and longer-lasting. This should help prevent the spread of the virus.

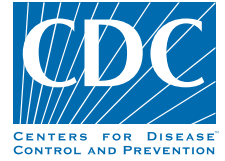
21. WHO SHOULD GET A BOOSTER DOSE?

All persons 12 years old and over who have had their first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine are eligible for the first booster shot six months after their second dose. A particular group of people who should consider getting a booster shot because they are at risk of becoming severely ill if they become infected with COVID-19 is those aged 50-years and older, those with non-communicable diseases, the immunocompromised, and pregnant women.

Frontline workers such as health care workers, security forces, tourism sector workers, and many others should also consider getting their booster dose as they are at a higher risk of infection because of their



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close and frequent contact with the public.

22. CAN I GET A SECOND BOOSTER SHOT?

As of April 2022, Barbados is offering the second booster shot. Adults aged 50 and older and immunocompromised individuals and frontline workers are eligible for the double booster dose four months after their first booster dose.

23. CAN CHILDREN HAVE THE BOOSTER VACCINE?

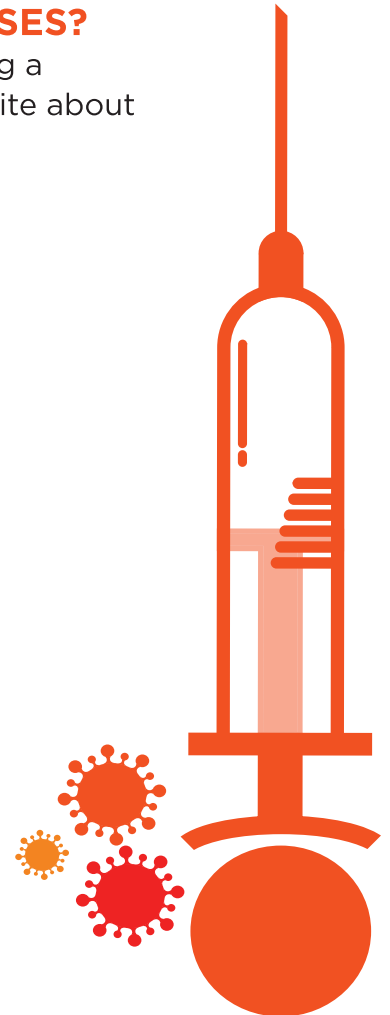
Children aged between 12 and 17 are eligible for a first booster shot six months after receiving the first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

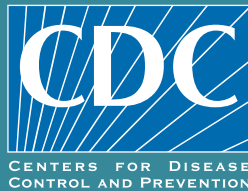
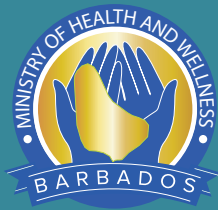
24. DO I NEED TO KEEP WEARING A MASK ONCE I GET MY BOOSTER?

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, continue to wear a mask inside public places in areas of substantial or high community transmission. Vaccinated and unvaccinated people should follow the national safety precautions.

25. IS THERE A PREFERRED BRAND FOR BOOSTER DOSES?

There is no preferred brand for booster vaccine doses. Persons getting a booster dose should consult with the health care professional at the site about what is best for them.





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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

COVID-19 HOTLINE:
536 4500