



HPSJ Myth Busters, COVID-19 Vaccines

“Safe COVID-19 vaccines that work really well are a vital part of how we will protect each other from COVID-19 sickness, hospital stays, and deaths. Californians have made amazing sacrifices to slow the spread of COVID-19. These two vaccines (Moderna and Pfizer) now are among our most valued tools to end the pandemic.” – **HPSJ Chief Medical Officer Dr. Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD and Board-Certified Pediatrician**

MYTH #1: I heard the vaccine will give me COVID-19.

The vaccines DO NOT have the virus. Vaccines teach our immune system how to fight the viruses. Sometimes this can cause some mild side effects. Those may involve tiredness, headache, soreness or redness where you got the vaccine, and muscle or joint pain. These are normal.

MYTH #2: They're just like the Flu Shots. Those never work for me.

The COVID vaccines are more effective than the yearly flu shots. All of them will protect you from getting very sick.

MYTH #3: A thing built at “Warp Speed” cannot be safe.

Scientists have been working on this vaccine before the pandemic. How? COVID-19 is part of a family of viruses. Scientists have been working on new vaccines to treat any new virus in this group. This led to the first COVID-19 vaccines. Each has been reviewed, then authorized for emergency use. They met all safety standards. No steps were skipped. Millions of Americans have now been safely vaccinated.

MYTH #4: I'm worried it will change my DNA.

COVID-19 vaccines do not change DNA. They teach the immune system how to fight COVID-19 by making antibodies that protect you.

MYTH #5: I'm not at risk for grave complications of COVID-19 so I don't need the vaccine.

You can still be infected with the coronavirus and spread it to others. About 40% of those infected show no symptoms. It's important to get vaccinated. This protects you, your family, and the community.

MYTH #6: I'm allergic to eggs so I shouldn't get the COVID-19 vaccine.

None of the FDA-authorized COVID vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) have eggs.

MYTH #7: I've now had COVID-19 and recovered, so I don't need to get vaccinated.

Scientists and doctors don't know how long or if you are really protected after getting COVID-19. You might still get COVID-19, carry and spread it. You still need to be vaccinated. If you tested positive, had mild symptoms, and were not treated for the coronavirus, you should wait at least 10 days since the start of your symptoms and be out of seclusion before you get the vaccine. If you recovered from a COVID-19 infection and were treated with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, wait 90 days to get vaccinated. It's best to talk with your doctor for more facts or about any concerns.

MYTH #8: I have a health problem, so it is not safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccination is especially vital for people with health problems. Those involve heart disease, asthma, diabetes, and obesity. You should talk with your doctor if you have any concerns.

MYTH #9: I need to choose between the different kinds of COVID-19 vaccines.

Each of them is very effective and safe. Each will keep you from getting sick with COVID-19. Which shot you get depends on where you register and when.

MYTH #10: I've heard I only need to get one COVID-19 vaccination.

For both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines you need two doses to have full safety. You should not get the second dose earlier than you need to.

MYTH #11: The COVID-19 vaccine can harm pregnant women.

While the research and clinical trials for the first two vaccines were not tested in pregnant women, some women did become pregnant during the trial and had healthy pregnancies and deliveries. For the best protection for mother and baby, it's vital for pregnant women to get vaccinated.

MYTH #12: Once I get the vaccine, I don't need to wear a mask.

Even though you are protected you can still infect others. By wearing our masks, washing our hands, and avoiding crowds we can protect each other. If you are fully vaccinated you can gather indoors in small groups with other fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask. Keep wearing masks around those with a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. If you live in a group setting and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should stay away from others for 14 days and get tested.

MYTH #13: As soon as I get a shot, I don't need to wear a mask – and I don't need second shot.

Vaccines need time to work. You can still get the virus right before or right after the shot. Wait two weeks after the second dose of Pfizer and Moderna to be fully protected.

“Remember, your actions will continue to save lives. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Watch your distance. When it’s your turn, please get vaccinated. Then, until everyone is safe, keep on being a protector: masking, handwashing, and physical distancing.” – **HPSJ Chief Medical Officer Dr. Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD**

MYTH #14: I will be sick from the vaccine for weeks, maybe months.

There are no reports of long-term side effects. Thousands were in clinical trials and millions have already been vaccinated. Mild side effects may last up to 1-2 days. Those include arm soreness, chills, fatigue, muscle soreness, and fever. If the symptoms don’t go away in a week, call your doctor. A very small number of people may have an allergic reaction. This is why you are asked to stay for 15 minutes after your shot. Getting COVID-19 can be much worse than side effects from any COVID shot.

MYTH #15: I cannot afford the COVID-19 vaccination.

The COVID-19 shot is free. There is no charge to register for an appointment. There is no cost to Health Plan of San Joaquin members for medically-needed screening, testing, and treatment for COVID-19.

MYTH #16: There are tracking microchips in the vaccine.

Vaccines – including shots for COVID-19 – do NOT have microchips, nanochips, or anything that would track or control your body. Doses are monitored as they are shipped to make sure they are not tampered with and stay safe.

MYTH #17: COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility.

In all of the research and review there is no evidence of this.

MYTH #18: It is better to get natural immunity to COVID-19, rather than protection from a vaccine.

You might have some short-term protection after getting COVID-19. We do not know how long protection lasts. Vaccination is the best and safest way to protect yourself. People who get COVID-19 can suffer serious illness or death. Some have symptoms that can last months after they recover from COVID-19.

MYTH #19: I can get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as my other vaccines.

If you get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine first, wait at least 14 days. If you get another vaccine first, wait at least 14 days before getting your COVID-19 vaccine. If a COVID-19 vaccine is given within 14 days of another vaccine you do not need to restart the COVID-19 vaccine series.

MYTH #20: I heard I need to get my younger children vaccinated so they will be safe – and not be accidental carriers.

COVID-19 vaccines are not recommended for children right now. Trials have started to find a safe vaccine for children. Vaccines are FDA-authorized for these age groups: Pfizer (for ages 16 and above), and for Moderna vaccine (for ages 18 and above).

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA).