What to know before accepting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defenses --- the immune system ---to recognize and fight off dangerous viruses and bacteria. If the body is exposed to those disease-causing pathogens later, the body is ready to fight them, preventing illness. Once vaccines start being administered, national authorities and the World Health Organization constantly monitor for – and establish the severity of – any possible adverse side effects and responses from people who have received the vaccine. The safety of the vaccine is paramount, with regular assessments and post-approval clinical studies to report on its safety and effectiveness.

- **Who gets vaccinated first?**
    - Initially, the supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States will be limited. CDC recommends initial supplies of COVID-19 vaccine be allocated to healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents. Recommendations were made with these goals in mind: decrease risk of death and serious disease on the most vulnerable population, preserve functioning of society, and reduce the extra burden COVID-19 is having on people already facing difficulties.
- **What to expect at your appointment to get vaccinated for COVID-19**
    - Before vaccinations
        - Learn more about the different types of COVID-19 vaccines and how they work.
        - Learn more about the benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccination.
        - When you go to your appointment, remember wear a mask when you are around others and stay at least 6 feet away from others.
    - When you get vaccinated
        - You should receive a vaccination card or printout that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it.
        - You should receive a document or its electronic version of a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you are being offered.
    - After Vaccination
        - With most COVID-19 vaccines, you will need two shots in order for the body to develop immunity. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first one, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.
        - It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.
- **Benefits of getting a COVID-19 Vaccine**
    - COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from developing serious illness from COVID-19, it is a safer way to protect the force, and are an important tool to help stop the pandemic.
- **If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?**
    - Yes. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again.
- **When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others after I have been vaccinated?**
    - There is not enough information currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- **Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from COVID-19 vaccines?**
    - Since this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Some early evidence— based on some people— seems to suggest that natural immunity may not last very long.
- **What percentage of the population needs to get vaccinated to have heard immunity to COVID-19?**
    - Experts do not know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19.

                                                        Resources: WHO and CDC