

COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



COVID-19 Vaccine Update Team Member FAQ 12.23.2020

Q: How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

A: Data for the Moderna vaccine showed an effectiveness rate of about 94% after two doses. Pfizer vaccines are about 95% effective after two doses.

Both vaccines prevented severe illness from COVID-19 by 100%. That means that none of the participants in either vaccine trial suffered severe illness from COVID-19 after receiving both doses.

Q: Are both COVID-19 vaccines safe?

A: Phase III trials indicate both Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are safe for most people.

Most of the reactions people experienced in the trials were mild and in line with most other vaccine reactions: Side effects like pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills and joint pain were the most commonly-reported reactions in trials.

Between the two trials, less than 1% of participants experienced serious, but non-fatal, reactions.

Q: Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

A: While minor side effects from vaccination are expected, the COVID-19 vaccine will not give you COVID-19.

The vaccine contains a synthetic strand of messenger RNA, or mRNA, which will in turn create a synthetic spike protein found on the novel coronavirus that will trigger an immune response from the body. Since the vaccine does not contain a live virus, there is no way to get COVID-19 from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

While this is the first time that this technology has been used to make a vaccine approved for human use, scientists have been studying this technology for about 30 years.

COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



Q: How can we know the vaccines are safe if they were developed so quickly?

A: The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were developed more quickly than other vaccines, but that doesn't mean either company or the FDA cut corners.

Several factors came together that allowed these companies to get safe, effective vaccines to the public quickly.

- First, while we are dealing with a new virus, the coronavirus family is not a stranger to scientists. Researchers have already been studying the novel coronavirus's cousins, so they were able to enter the vaccine development process with knowledge about the virus.
- Secondly, trials were able to proceed more quickly because researchers were able to find participants quickly. This helped speed the process up considerably.
- Finally, Operation Warp Speed allowed these companies to start manufacturing their vaccines before they got FDA approval. That means the companies took a chance that the vaccines wouldn't be approved, and they'd have to discard vaccines if they were rejected and start over. But when the vaccines were proved to be safe and effective, they were produced and ready to go as soon as they got FDA approval.

Q: If I get my COVID-19 vaccine, do I still have to wear a mask, social distance, etc.?

A: Yes. It's important to continue mask wearing, social distancing and frequent hand washing until everyone has access to vaccination. It will be several months before everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine is able to get one. Most estimates place this date somewhere in late spring.

Additionally, both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses, so it's possible to contract COVID-19 between doses. It's also possible to be infected with the virus as your body builds immunity after vaccination, which usually takes about two weeks.

Scientists are also still studying whether people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 can still spread it to others – much like how asymptomatic carriers can still spread the infection.

If a vaccinated person is infected with the novel coronavirus, they probably won't experience illness, but we still don't know if the vaccinated person can pass the virus on to an unvaccinated person.

In short, we know both vaccines are very effective in preventing illness, but we don't know if the vaccine is effective in stopping transmission.

COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



Q: If I already had COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

A: It is recommended that everyone who can safely get vaccinated receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

People can receive immunity from infection, which we sometimes call “natural immunity,” but we’re not sure how long that immunity lasts, and natural immunity varies person-to-person.

Q: How long will I be immune to COVID-19 after receiving a vaccine?

A: Phase III trials for both vaccines showed immunity for up to two months after the second dose.

We don’t have much data beyond that, so it will take some time for us to find out how long immunity from the vaccine will last.

Q: Have Ballad Health team members been experiencing side effects?

A: Most of our team members have experienced extremely minor side effects, mostly soreness at the injection site.

The plans we have in place at our vaccination pods include contingencies for any team members or patients who might have immediate, adverse reactions to the vaccine. Currently, each team member who receives a vaccine is observed for at least 15 minutes. Those with a history of adverse reactions to vaccination are observed for longer.

Team members are on-hand and prepared to treat anyone who might have an immediate and serious reaction to the vaccination.

Q: Is Ballad Health keeping vaccines back/not letting people have them?

A: No. Right now, we’re in the process of providing vaccines to frontline team members and physicians – those at the highest risk of contracting the virus at work – and we’ll continue working through tiers of team members.

We’re confident that every healthcare worker in our region who wants a vaccine will be able to get one soon. Ballad Health will announce the next steps in vaccinating the public when more information is available.

COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



Q: How many vaccines has Ballad Health received?

A: Ballad Health has received enough vaccines to successfully vaccinate more than 6,000 team members and physicians so far, and we have plans to vaccinate even more of our workforce in the coming weeks.

We're also collaborating with health departments and other partners to vaccinate other frontline health professionals, such as emergency medical services, non-affiliated physicians and other healthcare workers.

Note: This FAQ was last updated 12/23/20. Please refer to the COVID-19 Vaccine Update page on balladhealthnews.org for more FAQs and the latest updates.