BASIC THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

1. **Is the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective?**

   There is a lot of misinformation circulating about the vaccine.

   In the Phase 3 trials, there were no serious safety events observed—which means no devastating side effects for those that got the vaccine.

   Additionally, Phase 3 trials of several different COVID-19 vaccines found them to be up to 95 percent effective for preventing COVID-19, compared with placebo.

   The most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine include fatigue, headache, chills, and muscle pain in a very small percentage of recipients. A smaller number of people may also have temporary swelling at the injection site. Side effects are often more noticeable after the second dose.

   Side effects usually last no more than a day and can be managed with regular recommended doses of Tylenol or Motrin.

2. **How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?**

   mRNA vaccines contain material from the virus that causes COVID-19 that gives our cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus. After our cells make copies of the protein, they destroy the genetic material from the vaccine. Our bodies recognize that the protein should not be there and build T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if we are infected in the future.

3. **Does the COVID-19 vaccine require two doses?**

   The Pfizer vaccine is given in a two-dose schedule, with the second dose coming three weeks after the first.

   The Moderna vaccine is also given in a two-dose schedule, with the second dose coming four weeks after the first.

   For both vaccines, it is important to time the doses correctly to ensure the vaccine is effective.

4. When will I be able to be vaccinated?

Once healthcare workers are vaccinated, there are as many as 200 million additional Americans who are considered high-risk individuals who will be vaccinated before healthy individuals.

Assisted living communities are included in the phase one of the distribution process as our staff is considered essential, and our residents have pre-existing conditions that make them more vulnerable.

5. What should I do while I wait for a COVID-19 vaccine?

It is essential that everyone continue to practice their COVID Infection Prevention Bundle:

- Wear a mask in public
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Maintain physical space
- Avoid crowds
- Ventilate shared indoor spaces
- Get tested when symptomatic, you've possibly been exposed, or before/after travel

6. If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when its available?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Until we have a vaccine available and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices makes recommendations to CDC on how to best use COVID-19 vaccines, CDC cannot comment on whether people who had COVID-19 should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

7. Why would a vaccine be needed if we can do other things, like social distancing and wearing masks, to prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading?

Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask and staying at least 6 feet away from others, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Source: CDC webpage