Frequently Asked Questions

About COVID-19

When will COVID-19 be over?

COVID-19 is likely always going to be around.

The way we cope will be different than at the start of the pandemic.

A few things will affect how things go with COVID in the future:

- How the virus mutates. The more people who get COVID, the more likely it is that mutations, AKA variants will happen.
- Immunity. The more people who have immunity (e.g. via vaccines), the less COVID will be passed around and the less sick people will get from it.
- Prevention. The things we do to prevent COVID being spread (e.g. getting vaccinated) will impact how the virus stays around.

New variants of COVID will mean that vaccines have to be updated. We will likely need to get COVID boosters, just like we get a yearly flu shot.

Where did COVID-19 come from?

It's still unclear exactly where COVID-19 came from.
The strongest evidence so far says that COVID-19 came from bats.

Scientists have found that the COVID-19 virus is related to the SARS virus, and we know that SARS came from bats.
The first cases of COVID-19 were in Wuhan, China. Scientists believe Wuhan is the place where COVID-19 came from.

How many COVID-19 variants are there?

There are five COVID-19 variants that scientists are concerned about (as of October, 2022).

The most common variant in BC is called Omicron.

Viruses naturally mutate over time and make new versions of themselves.

The new versions are called variants. It is likely that there will be more variants as time goes on. The more COVID is passed around, the more likely it is that new variants will happen.

This FAQ Poster was created by the ADVANCE Study Team, with the support of people who were incarcerated at the time of the study (2022). For references, please see *Making Informed Choices: A COVID-19 Activity and Info Book, Reference Edition* by the ADVANCE Study.

Frequently Asked Questions

About COVID-19 Vaccines

Is there a vaccine that doesn't have any risks?

No, but the risks for COVID-19 vaccines are very low. COVID-19 vaccines teach our bodies how to fight off the virus. In the process, some people get side effects like fever, or a sore arm. Side effects are normal, and can be a sign that the vaccine is working. Serious side effects for COVID-19 vaccines are rare. The rate of serious reactions across all COVID-19 vaccines is 0.011%. That's about 100th of 1%, or 1 in 11,000.

What are the side-effects of the vaccine?

The most common side-effects are:

- Chills
- Tiredness
- Redness, soreness, or swelling at the injection site
- Headaches
- Mild fever
- Muscle and joint pain

These side-effects are not harmful. Not everyone gets side-effects. But in people who get them, side-effects can be a sign that the vaccine is doing its job and prepping your body to fight off COVID-19.

What protection does the vaccine provide?

COVID-19 vaccines lower your chances of:

- Getting COVID-19
- Getting really sick from the virus
- Needing to go to the hospital
- Dying from COVID-19

How much protection you have depends on:

- How many COVID-19 vaccine doses you've had
- Time since your last shot
- The variant you're exposed to
- Your body and immune system

Protection from vaccines wears off over time. Booster shots can protect you from getting really sick.

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Frequently Asked Questions

About COVID-19 Booster Shots

What is the goal of vaccination?

On a global level, the goals of vaccination are:

- To reduce the number of people who get sick and die from COVID-19
- To lower the burden of sickness on individuals and on the healthcare system
- To get society and the economy back up and running
- To lower the chances of new variants developing. Variants are versions of the virus that can be more aggressive in terms of how they spread and how sick they make people.

Why do I need a booster shot?

Vaccines prep your body to spot COVID-19 and fight it off.
When you get vaccinated, it trains special fighter cells in your body to make armour against COVID-19, called antibodies. This armour doesn't last forever. It starts to wear off after several months. Booster shots tell the fighter cells to make more armour, so you can stay protected. They can also help to keep you safe from new COVID-19 variants, by giving your immune system's fighting power a boost.

How many booster shots are necessary?

We don't yet know how often booster shots will be needed. How often boosters are needed might also be impacted by the development of new variants.

Scientists are currently looking at big groups of vaccinated people to see how much protection they have and how long it lasts.

Figuring these things out takes time, which is why it's too soon to say how many and how often booster shots are needed.
While we might not be able to get rid of COVID, we can reduce the harm it causes in our communities. If more people get vaccinated, COVID will become more manageable and have less impact on people.

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