COVID-19 Vaccination: Questions and Answers for Family Planning Clients

What is the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are shots that can protect you from getting COVID-19. The vaccines are very good at preventing severe illness and death. If you're fully vaccinated and get COVID-19 the chances of going to the hospital are very low. And having the vaccine lowers your chances of spreading COVID-19 to others. You should know that no vaccine works 100% of the time. There's still a chance that you may catch COVID-19 after getting the shot.

Everyone 5 years of age and older can get the COVID-19 vaccine. Three vaccines are available:

- The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is 2 doses, spaced 4 weeks apart.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is 2 doses, spaced 3 weeks apart.
- The Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine is only 1 dose.

It takes 2 weeks after your last shot for your body to be protected. Boosters are recommended six months after the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. They are recommended 2 months after the Janssen vaccine.

These vaccines are effective and safe. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, get vaccinated as soon as you can.

How much does the COVID-19 vaccine cost?

COVID-19 vaccines are free. You don't need health insurance and your immigration status doesn't matter.

How do I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

You can get a COVID-19 vaccination at many locations. These include drug stores, health centers, many doctors' offices, and county-run sites. You may have to make an appointment, but some places offer walk-ins.

You can find places to get a vaccine in California by going to *myturn.ca.gov*. You also can schedule second shots and booster shots. You can even set up a free ride to get your vaccination.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines at the same time?

Yes. You can get the COVID-19 vaccine and others like the HPV vaccine at the same time.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. Like all vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines were carefully tested before they were approved. Scientists studied people of different ages, races, ethnicities, and with different medical conditions. Hundreds of millions of people have had these vaccines in the U.S. and other countries. The safety record is excellent. Experts here and around the world are watching both the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine over time.

You can't get COVID-19 from the vaccines. They don't change your DNA or cause any

permanent changes in your body.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility or miscarriage?

No. Research shows that COVID-19 vaccines don't make you infertile. They don't cause miscarriage or problems in pregnancy.

There have been false claims that the COVID-19 vaccine causes fertility issues. This is NOT true and isn't based on any science or research. The vaccine trains your immune systems to attack the virus. It does not attack your internal organs.

How does COVID-19 infection affect a pregnant person?

People who are pregnant are more likely to get sicker or die from COVID-19. Pregnant people who have COVID-19 have a higher risk of pregnancy problems. This includes early birth. Pregnant people and anyone they live with should stay as healthy as possible. They should take steps to avoid being exposed to COVID-19 and other illnesses.

Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine if I'm pregnant?

Yes. Research shows that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for pregnant people. It has no effect on the fetus.

If you are trying to become pregnant, you should receive COVID-19 vaccine. There is no need for a pregnancy test before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you get pregnant after the first shot of a two-shot COVID-19 vaccine, get your second shot. This will give you as much protection as possible. A booster will give even more protection over a longer time.

Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine if I'm nursing?

Yes, the vaccines are safe while nursing. In fact, they may help protect your baby from COVID-19. It is normal for mothers to pass antibodies to infants in breast milk. You can read more about vaccine safety on the CDC website.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine cause autism? Does it cause other problems with future pregnancies?

No. Vaccines do not cause autism. COVID-19 vaccines do not change your DNA. Your body gets rid of the vaccine once it's done building immunity. Nothing from the vaccines can be passed to children.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect my period?

Maybe. One study showed that the vaccine sometimes makes a period start a day or two later than usual. Lots of things can make your period lighter, heavier, or change when it comes. For example, stress, being sick, certain medicines, and hormonal changes.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect birth control?

No. It does not affect birth control or fertility.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment?

No. The COVID-19 and other vaccines do not affect STI treatment.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect mammograms?

A few people had harmless swelling in their armpits after getting the shot. This is very rare and will go away. This may look like breast cancer on an X-ray and cause a false result. The COVID-19 vaccine does NOT cause breast cancer.

If you need a mammogram, try to schedule it before your first COVID-19 shot or 4-6 weeks after your last shot. But don't skip it because of your vaccine.

Other useful information about COVID-19 and family planning

Can you get COVID-19 from sex?

You can get COVID-19 if you're close to someone who has it. Close contact, such as sex, with someone who has it can give you COVID-19. Keep in mind that people may not know that they have COVID-19.

The virus is found in feces (poop) of people who have COVID-19. We don't know if it can spread this way. To be safe, avoid sexual activities that could expose you to poop. These include unprotected oral sex on an anus or putting a penis or sex toy in your mouth. If you do these activities, be extra careful. Use condoms or dental dams. Clean your sex toys well before each use, to protect yourself and your partner(s).

Again, some people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms or have mild symptoms. You can't tell if someone has COVID-19 based on how they look or feel.

How can I safely have sex during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to get the vaccine. If fully vaccinated, it's mostly safe to have close contact and sex with other vaccinated people. If you aren't vaccinated, try to avoid close contact and sex with people you don't live with. The risk is even greater if they also don't have the vaccine.

If you or your partner feel sick or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, get tested.

How can I prevent pregnancy and STIs during the pandemic?

Condoms will help protect you and your partners from most STIs. You also can use condoms if you can't get your normal birth control method.

If you make a birth control mistake, you can use emergency contraceptive pills (the "morning after pill"). This can prevent pregnancy up to five days after sex. You can get the

morning after pill at most family planning clinics or drug stores. If you are a Family PACT client, the program covers the cost of these pills. You can get them at a drug store if it is prescribed by your clinician.

References:

[Planned Parenthood Coronavirus Information](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 and Pregnant and Recently Pregnant People](#)

[American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)](#)

[California Department of Public Health: Guidance for Vaccination During Pregnancy](#)