

Learn More About COVID-19

One in a series of four

Why does “the science” mean opposite things to different experts?

“The science” is not one thing but a collection of research going on all over the world. COVID-19 is a new virus that only recently entered our world. Scientists and policy makers are evaluating complex information and trying to reach areas of agreement in the midst of this pandemic. All are doing their best to understand this virus and how to protect communities. For everyone, there is a certain amount of learning as we go.

When do I know enough to get a vaccine and make other decisions about my family’s health?

We talk with sources we trust including our own doctors, school nurses, pharmacists, and other trusted health care professionals. These people are familiar with our family’s health and our communities. They can help us make the best decision for our families. But nothing is etched in stone, and we all need to be open to new ideas and changing circumstances.



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Why is there conflicting information about masks?

Before COVID-19, research about masks was mostly about disposable paper masks used during surgery. We did not have research looking at the real-world use of the variety of masks now being used. And, since COVID-19 is new, we did not have information about the impact of wearing masks on COVID-19 disease or spread. One thing we did learn about masks last year was that mask use combined with social distancing helped prevent spread of influenza and all respiratory viruses.

What weapons do we have against COVID-19?

Masks are one of them. Vaccines are even better. Wearing masks prevents at least some amount of COVID-19 spread.

What did Operation Warp Speed accomplish?

Operation Warp Speed gave us our best weapon against COVID-19 – vaccines!

Operation Warp Speed successfully accomplished its mission - to develop, manufacture, and begin distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. Operation Warp Speed recognized the key role of the pharmaceutical industry and the importance of the private sector in developing vaccines.

Public funds were used to fund the production of candidate vaccines so that the vaccines that proved to be safe and effective would be immediately ready for the public.

Operation Warp Speed built on many years of research. It did not rush or shortcut evaluation of COVID-19 vaccines.



Vaccines

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Where Needed**

**Common
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Why should children be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Though older adults are the most vulnerable, children and teens can get seriously sick from COVID-19.

No shortcuts are being taken with COVID-19 vaccine research or recommendations. Once they are recommended for your children, taking advantage of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines is our best weapon against COVID-19 disease and development of new variants.

The best way to protect ourselves from a serious complication from COVID-19 when a family or household member gets infected is with everyone else in the household being vaccinated! It is not practical to mask and socially distance in our homes.



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How safe are COVID-19 vaccines?

Over 357 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been used in more than 189 million people in the U.S., including adults and teens down to the age of 12. We have a convincing track record of their safety. Because so many adults and teens have had the vaccine, we have already learned about any rare side effects. Since side effects are so rare and generally very mild, the benefits of getting a vaccine to prevent a serious case of COVID-19 far outweigh the risks of side effects from the vaccine. Though you can still get COVID-19 if vaccinated, it is extremely rare to get a serious case. That is exactly what being safe and effective means.

Should I wait for a newer COVID-19 vaccine that targets the newer variants?

We continue to learn as we go. But you need to make the best choice for your family now. Getting vaccinated helps prevent serious disease, hospitalization, and death. Getting vaccinated also helps prevent new variants from developing.

What are your risks of not vaccinating?

The known risks of getting COVID-19 and becoming sick, including long-term heart and other complications, are much higher than the common sore arm or 1 to 2 days of flu-like discomfort after COVID-19 vaccination. As we learn, you can always get additional boosters or new vaccines tackling newer variants. Make the best decision for your health now.

Afraid of needles? Afraid of long-term side effects?

Don't let fear stand in your way. Find a vaccine buddy to text with you through the process. Let vaccination staff know you are nervous. They can help you with breathing and relaxation. It is very important to understand that there are no known serious long-term side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine or from any of the vaccines used today.



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