

Address New Questions About COVID-19 Vaccines

You'll get **more questions about COVID-19 vaccinations.**

Vaccine choice. Urge eligible patients to get immunized ASAP with ANY COVID-19 vaccine...Pfizer-BioNTech's or Moderna's mRNA product or Johnson & Johnson/Janssen's viral vector option.

Emphasize the "best" vaccine to get is the one that's available.

Educate that all 3 vaccines have at least 85% efficacy at preventing severe COVID-19...such as cases leading to ICU admissions or death. Plus efficacy seems similar for younger and older adults.

Explain that these are not live vaccines...and can be given to immunocompromised patients and pregnant or breastfeeding moms.

Asymptomatic spread and variants. Growing data suggest these vaccines decrease asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and transmission.

And expect evidence to continue to emerge about how vaccine efficacy holds up against viral variants.

For now, advise to keep wearing a mask in public after immunization. But CDC says it's okay not to wear one, even indoors, with other fully vaccinated people...those who are at least 2 weeks after their final dose.

Adverse effects. These are similar overall for the 3 vaccines.

Patients may hear about "COVID arm"...a large, red, itchy reaction around the injection site a week or so after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

Reassure that this is uncommon and NOT a reason to avoid the second dose. Consider giving the second dose in the opposite arm.

Ethical concerns. Patients may ask you whether there's a link between COVID-19 vaccines and aborted fetal cells.

Decades ago, cells from aborted fetal tissue were copied in the lab to make cell lines that can be used indefinitely.

These cell lines were used in tests to confirm mRNA COVID-19 vaccines work...and to make the adenovirus vector for Janssen's vaccine. But these lines are thousands of replications removed from fetal tissue.

Clarify that none of these vaccines contain aborted fetal tissue...and cell lines are filtered out of the final vaccines.

Find answers to many other FAQs in our chart, Communicating About COVID-19 Vaccination...including authorized ages, precautions, and more.

Get our chart, COVID-19 Vaccines, for dosing, storage and stability, etc...and details on the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Key References:

- www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html (3-26-21)
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html (3-26-21)
- N Engl J Med Published online Mar 3, 2021; doi:10.1056/NEJMc2102131
- www.immunize.org/talking-about-vaccines/religious-concerns.asp (3-26-21)

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