

# Health Awareness

## Campaign Busts Myths About COVID-19 Vaccines

by *We Can Do This COVID-19 Public Education Campaign*

(NAPS)—Tennessee has one of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the nation. Myths and misinformation, which can spread faster than the virus, are contributing to lower vaccine confidence.

“Tennessee residents should closely scrutinize the sources of health information they rely on and ask trusted health-care professionals to help them make informed decisions about vaccinations,” said Dr. LaTonya Washington, Chief Medical Officer at Methodist North Hospital in Memphis and President of the Bluff City Medical Society. “Getting most residents vaccinated is the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 and get back to some sort of normal.”

Here are answers to common COVID-19 vaccine questions:

**Q: Do young and healthy people need to get vaccinated?**

**A:** The longer this pandemic goes on, the more evidence there is that COVID-19 can cause long-term health problems, even for people who didn't have other chronic conditions before they were infected. It is much safer to take a vaccine that is highly effective at preventing COVID-related hospitalizations or death than it is to risk getting a disease that could leave you with a serious health condition for the rest of your life. FDA-authorized and approved vaccines are highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and premature death.

**Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility?**

**A:** COVID-19 vaccines do NOT affect fertility. If you are trying to become pregnant now or want to get pregnant in the future, CDC recommends getting a COVID-19 vaccine. No evidence indicates that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems. In fact, vaccines are frequently given to people who want to get pregnant to protect them from different viruses during pregnancy. If you are trying to become pregnant, then you do not need to avoid pregnancy after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Q: Are the vaccines safe for those currently pregnant or breastfeeding?**

**A:** Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Pregnant people report the same side effects as everyone else and there is no evidence of miscarriages, stillbirths or preterm births linked to receiving the vaccines. However, COVID-19 during pregnancy increases the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes. Pregnant

	Mask Indoors in Public Settings	Test if Exposed or Symptomatic	Vaccinate
Children 0-2		✓	
Children 2-11	✓	✓	
Everyone 12 and Up	✓	✓	✓
Immunocompromised* Individuals	✓	✓	✓
Pregnant Individuals	✓	✓	✓

\*Can receive additional dose. As of August 23, 2021.

CDC.gov/coronavirus

### Everyone in Tennessee can take steps to stop the COVID virus.

and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people, and getting a vaccine can protect from severe illness. Recent reports have also shown that breastfeeding parents who have received mRNA COVID-19 vaccines have antibodies in their breastmilk, which could help protect their babies.

**Q: It seems like the COVID-19 vaccines were rushed. How do we know they're safe?**

**A:** COVID-19 vaccines are new but people have been using vaccines for centuries. Two COVID-19 vaccines were the first authorized vaccines to use a new technology—messenger RNA—but even that technology has been tested and studied for decades.

Researchers had a head start on COVID-19 vaccines. Scientists at the National Institutes of Health created a vaccine that could be custom made to fight different strains of coronavirus, the virus that causes COVID-19. Using these studies, they were able to make a COVID-19 test vaccine just a month after the virus was discovered.

Vaccines are usually developed one step at a time, and companies wait until they have final approval to start manufacturing. But addressing the pandemic couldn't wait, so government and industry invested millions of dollars to produce vaccines while test data was under review. FDA authorized the use of three vaccines in response to the pandemic. Emergency-use authorizations get vaccines distributed faster than the formal FDA approval process without skipping any mandatory safety checks. Large clinical trials proved that the vaccines were safe and effective and real-world experience has confirmed those findings.

For more information and to find a vaccine, visit [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).