



- People with I/DD have a higher rate of COVID-19 infection and death.
- We all need to continue to wear our masks and wash our hands.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and available now.

Questions? Concerns?
Click [HERE](#) to visit the CDC Vaccination Information Page

In late December, and in response to fierce advocacy efforts by many of us, New York State announced that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) living in congregate care settings are among the state's most vulnerable, and they, along with the staff who support them, will be included in the Priority 1A phase of the COVID-19 vaccination plan. This great news has advocates for people with I/DD cheering.

In one way or another, we have all been affected by COVID-19, either personally or because we know someone who has been affected.

The COVID-19 virus is highly contagious and the course of illness is unpredictable. People with certain underlying health conditions often have worse outcomes. However, people of all ages and in good health are still becoming very ill; others, with or without health issues, are suffering mild illness and fully recovering; some people who have had mild or severe symptoms can become so-called long-haulers, experiencing neurological and other effects for months after becoming infected, with no end in sight.

The one thing that is clear is that there is no way to know who will get very sick and who will not. Protecting oneself and those around you from this disease is very important.

With the recent FDA vaccines authorized for emergency use, protection is at hand and hundreds of thousands of medical and other healthcare professionals across the country have lined up to get their shots.

This is very good news, yet some people are still hesitant to take the vaccine. It is essential that we are knowledgeable about the current vaccines, using all of the facts at hand.

We encourage you to go to the [CDC website](#) for vital vaccine information. The contents of some of the CDC communications are below and will assist you in ascertaining the facts. We will continue sending you information so you are informed and can share your knowledge with the people we support, your co-workers, your families, the families of the people we support, and anyone you meet that is reticent or refuses to be vaccinated. Misleading or unfounded information about the COVID-19 vaccines imperils our ability to dramatically contain the virus and save lives.

FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

[Click here for other languages](#)

Now that there are authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, accurate vaccine information is critical.

FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19

None of the [COVID-19 vaccines](#) currently in development or in use in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity. Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests

Neither the recently authorized and recommended vaccines nor the other COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States cause you to test positive on [viral tests](#), which are used to see if you have a **current infection**.

If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some [antibody tests](#). Antibody tests indicate you had a **previous infection** and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

FACT: People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. We won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have more data on how well it works. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and the CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

FACT: Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19

While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a [severe illness](#) or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at [increased risk of severe complications](#). If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).

FACT: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA

mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease. Learn more about [how COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work](#).

How do I know which sources of COVID-19 vaccine information are accurate?

It can be difficult to know which sources of information you can trust. Learn more about [finding credible vaccine information](#).

If you have any questions please send us an [email](#).



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