

Vaccine FAQ

January 12, 2021

Long term care is at the center of the pandemic. In Washington alone, there have been 13,338 cases with 2,900 deaths and those numbers are rising. Long term care facilities such as the Odd Fellows Home account for 52% of all the deaths in Washington. So far, 162 of our co-workers have missed work due to COVID. Help us protect our residents!

Why should I get the vaccine now versus “wait and see”?

- You are not the first: 9 million people have received the vaccine since December
- CDC, V-Safe, and VAERS are monitoring safety
- Last week in the US 21,000 people died of COVID-19 in the US, and the cases are rising
- Vaccines take 4-5 weeks to protect you fully
- New COVID-19 strains are more contagious

Why is it important for Odd Fellows and other Long Term Care workers to get the vaccine?

- Nursing home workers face very high risk of infection due to role in direct patient care
- Nursing home workers are essential – they can't work from home, and must be out and among people which is risky
- Nursing home workers can bring COVID-19 into the facility and infect residents
- Despite everything that is being done to protect our residents, we have been unable to keep COVID-19 out of the facility
- Once inside the facility, COVID-19 can spread rapidly

Were vaccines tested on people like me?

- YES
- Vaccine trials included all adults over 18
- 25% of participant mandated to be over 65
- Study participants included at least 25% of people with high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV and cancer
- No exclusions for disease or medication (except immune suppression)
- Exception: Unfortunately, the vaccine studies did not include pregnant people

What type of reactions have been reported after vaccine dose?

- Common reactions: sore arm, headache, fever, all last less than 48 hours. (Similar reactions after Shingrex and influenza vaccine)
- Rare reactions:

- Anaphylaxis: 21 cases out of over 2,000,000 doses
- If you have a history of severe allergies or anaphylaxis, recommend discussion with your PCP and 30 minutes of observation after receiving the vaccine
- People with allergies and anaphylaxis have received the vaccine with no issues.

Is the vaccine safe for older adults?

- During testing, 15,921 participants over the age of 55 with no safety concerns
- There were 20 cases of COVID-19 in people over 65, 19 of those were people that received the placebo.

Does mRNA change your DNA?

- **NO**
- mRNA is a signal to your cell. It stays in the outer part of our cell. It does not enter the nucleus where the DNA is located.
- The mRNA in the vaccine is only present in the body for 1 – 3 days, then it degrades and the immune system is primed.
- Other vaccines do the same thing: material enters your body, but only stays a few days.

Why do I have to wear a mask after getting immunized to COVID-19?

- The vaccine prevents COVID-19 disease, severe disease, and death.
- We do not know if the vaccine prevents asymptomatic infection
- Until we know that, we must assume that vaccinated people might get COVID-19 but not know it.
- Masks and social distancing will still be required until we have more information.

How long does vaccine immunity to COVID-19 last?

- We don't know. COVID-19 is a brand-new human disease, we will need more time to determine how long vaccine responses last.

How will viral mutations affect COVID-19 vaccines?

- We don't know. Scientists are actively tracking this. Viral mutation is always possible, so scientists factored this in when creating the vaccines.
- Flattening the curve and reducing infections also reduces the possibility of viral mutation.