**Your Questions Answered: COVID-19 Vaccine**

***Updated Dec. 15, 2020***

Below are answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. This overview will be updated on an ongoing basis and more information will be added as it becomes available.

**Vaccine Safety, Efficacy and Side Effects**

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**

Although we have a short time frame to evaluate this question, the Pfizer vaccine was given to

22,000 diverse individuals without serious problems.

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine effective?**

The Pfizer vaccine has been found to be 95% effective in preventing disease with Sars COV-2.

This is among the very best efficacy seen with vaccines. Side effects seen include chills, aches,

low grade fever and sore arm similar to those seen with the current flu shot and occur mostly

after the second dose.

**How many doses are needed?**

Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the United States require two shots, including the

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine which will be offered to Connecticut Children’s team members initially.

The first shot starts building protection, but everyone has to come back a few weeks later for the

second one to get the most protection the vaccine can offer.

**Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Each person will need to make that individual decision. The data we have so far show that this

is a very effective and safe vaccine.

**Does the COVID-19 vaccine have side effects? If so, what are they?**

Most of the side effects occur after the second dose. They include sore arm at the site of

injection, headache, fatigue, chills and fever that last for 24 hours.

**OVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Should I be worried about how quickly the COVID-19 vaccine was developed and brought**

**to production?**

COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards.

Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offers

protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different

medical conditions. In addition:

 The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carefully reviews all safety data from clinical

trials and authorizes emergency vaccine use only when the expected benefits outweigh

potential risks.

 The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) reviews all safety data

before recommending any COVID-19 vaccine for use.

 The FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, to make

sure even very rare side effects are identified.

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine that helpful? I heard getting COVID-19 gives you better and**

**longer immunity than the protection a vaccine can give.**

Both this disease and the vaccine are new. We don’t know how long protection lasts for those

who get infected or those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused

very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to

loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice. The clinical

trial using this vaccine clearly shows it effectively reduces the likelihood of getting clinical

infection by 95%.

**How do we know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe when it is so new? Couldn’t it cause**

**problems that we don’t know about yet? What about long-term problems?**

A number of COVID-19 vaccines are being tested in large clinical trials to assess their safety.

However, it does take time, and more people getting vaccinated before we learn about very rare

or long-term side effects. That is why safety monitoring will continue. CDC has an independent

group of experts that reviews all the safety data as it comes in and provides regular safety

updates. If a safety issue is detected, immediate action will take place to determine if the issue

is related to the COVID-19 vaccine and determine the best course of action.

**Should pregnant and post-partum breastfeeding women receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

We do not have the data to assess safety in these individuals. Certainly there is no reason to

think immunizing breastfeeding women will have any harm to the neonate. We do not know the

effect of immunization on pregnant women. There is no theoretical contraindication to the use of

this vaccine in pregnancy. We do know that pregnant women are at higher risk of becoming

seriously ill with COVID-19. **Each woman will need to make this decision in consultation**

**with their health care provider.**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**After I receive the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, will I be immune to the virus?**

The data show that after the second dose, there is a 95% efficacy in the prevention of infection.

We do not know how long this immunity lasts.

**If I’m experiencing any flu-like symptoms the day of my clinic appointment, is it ok to**

**receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Connecticut Children’s would not recommend the vaccine if you are ill at the time of

immunization. You should remain at home and discuss with your manager and One Call as to

whether COVID-19 testing is indicated.

**Workplace Implications**

**After I receive the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, will there be a change in the**

**PPE that I need to wear to work?**

No. You must continue to use all PPE and precautions at work and in the community.

**If I experience side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and I’m not feeling well,**

**should I come into work?**

We will need to individualize this depending on the type of side effects we see in our team

members. If there is no fever and a sore arm there is no reason to refrain from work. Team

members with fever and flu-like symptoms should stay at home. If the symptoms resolve within

24 hours and there is no other known COVID-19 exposure, the team member should return to

work.