



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Clay County Public Health

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Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is an important decision for all of us in our community to make. Everyone has the personal freedom to decide whether to receive the vaccine or not. There is a lot of information, and misinformation, out there about the vaccines. Clay County Public Health would like to address some common facts vs myths. Questions and concerns are a normal part of making any important decision. We welcome any questions that are not addressed here.

Facts vs Myths

Myth: My risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 is low. I have heard that over 99% of infected people survive, so there is no need for me to get vaccinated. I don't want the side effects from the vaccine to be worse than getting the infection.

Facts:

- Although a 1% fatality rate seems low, it is not. For example, 1% of the U.S. population is over 3.2 million people. That is a huge price to pay in human lives. The vaccine can prevent many deaths.
- The risks of serious illness from COVID-19 far outweigh any side effects or risks from the vaccine, even for young healthy people. Right now, in Minnesota, most hospitalizations from COVID-19 are people under age 60. This is because most seniors have had the vaccine.
- Keep in mind that the long-term effects of COVID-19 are still being studied. It is known that the virus enters the brain, heart, and lungs and has caused chronic health issues even in those with mild infections.
- Even if you are not at high risk for complications, if you have COVID-19, you may pass the virus along to someone who is at high risk.
- Every time the virus infects someone, it changes. The longer we allow the virus to circulate in our communities, the more risk there is of the virus mutating and creating new variants of the virus. Variants are a problem because they can be more contagious and cause more severe illness.
- A vaccine is the only way out of this pandemic. There has never been an infectious disease eliminated through natural immunity (without a vaccine).

Myth: The vaccines were produced too quickly and without enough safety data. I am not willing to be part of a research experiment, so I will wait until more data is out there.

Fact: There were no shortcuts in the regulatory process used by the FDA. All the safety and efficacy measures were met after a rigorous analysis. Usually, the *production* process is much longer for new vaccines. This means the federal government took a gamble in providing funding ahead of time (before the safety and efficacy studies were complete) so

that if the vaccine was found to be safe and effective, no time would be wasted in producing it in large amounts for the public.

Myth: Because the vaccine is so new, the potential for long term side effects is not known.

Fact: Serious side effects, although very rare, have always been seen within 2 months of getting any vaccine. This was the reason the FDA would not approve any of the new COVID-19 vaccines until at least 2 months had passed after the large-scale trials were completed.

Myth: I have heard that getting the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine could alter my DNA.

Fact: Concerns about viral RNA integrating into our own DNA are unfounded and is biologically not possible. The mRNA in the vaccine does not enter the nucleus of the cell (where our DNA resides).

Myth: I have heard that getting vaccine could affect my fertility.

Fact: Fertility is not affected by the vaccine. The following is a statement from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine:

“As experts in reproductive health, we continue to recommend that the vaccine be available to pregnant individuals. We also assure patients that there is no evidence that the vaccine can lead to loss of fertility. While fertility was not specifically studied in the clinical trials of the vaccine, no loss of fertility has been reported among trial participants or among the millions who have received the vaccines since their authorization, and no signs of infertility appeared in animal studies. Loss of fertility is scientifically unlikely.”

In fact, pregnancy is a high-risk factor for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people. The risks of health complications from COVID-19 during pregnancy are much higher than any risks or side effects of the vaccine.

Myth: I have already had COVID-19, so I do not need the vaccine.

Fact: It is still possible to get become infected after recovering from COVID-19 and it is not yet known how long your body will be immune. Getting the vaccine reduces the risk of getting infected again and getting sick, especially as new strains of the virus continue to spread.

Myth: I have heard that a booster shot may be needed in the future anyway, so getting the vaccine now is not worth it.

Fact: Studies are ongoing about the frequency of booster shots. Booster shots may be needed yearly, like the influenza vaccine. Getting the vaccine now is urgent to prevent serious illness and deaths, considering the high level of community spread.

Myth: We are still being told to wear a mask and follow other guidelines even after getting the vaccine, which means the vaccine is not that effective.

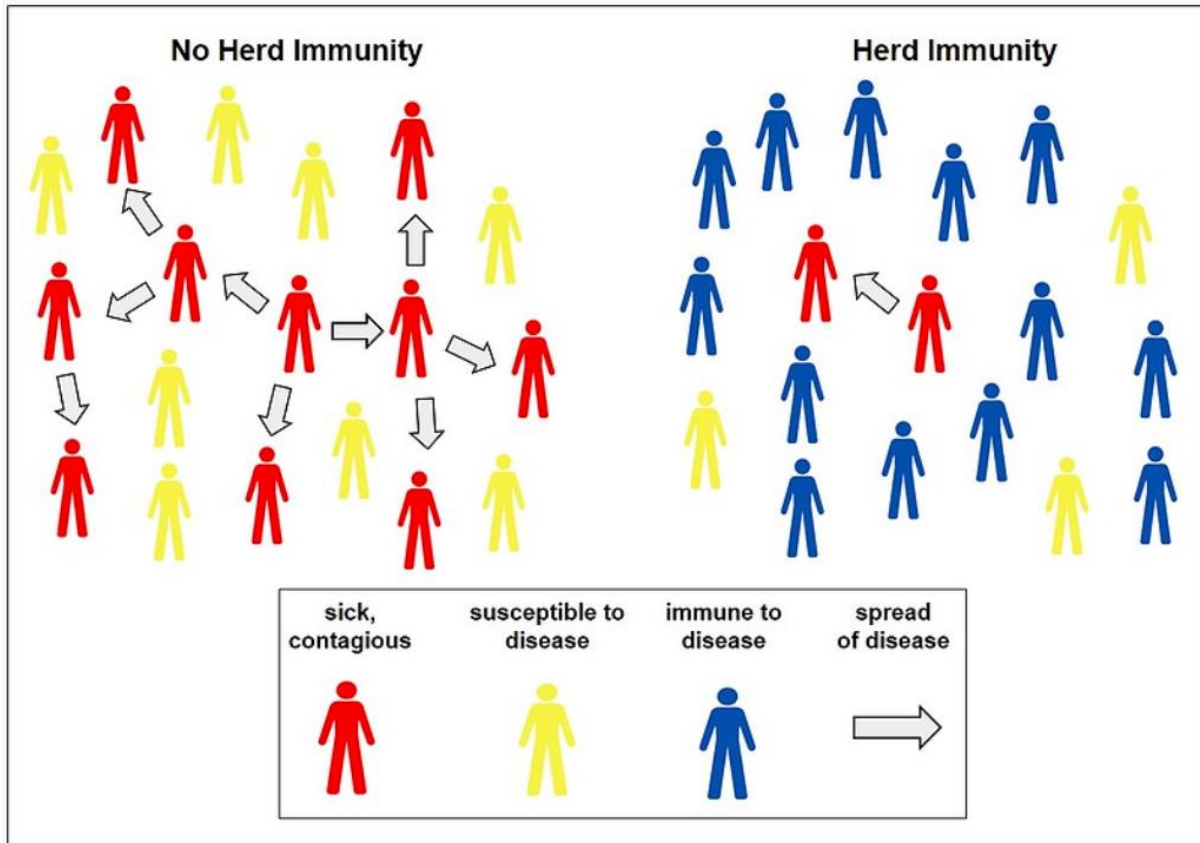
Fact: Although these vaccines are very effective, they are not 100% effective at preventing infection. However, the vaccines greatly reduce hospitalization and death. The more people that get vaccinated, the more effective the vaccines can be to protect our entire community. Right now, many people in our community are not immune to this virus and may have serious health problems. Until more people get vaccinated, these prevention measures help to protect your loved ones and your community.

Myth: If I get a vaccine now, I am taking away someone else's spot. I am going to wait so that other people can be vaccinated before me.

Fact: There is plenty of vaccine for everyone! Originally, vaccines were prioritized for the highest risk populations because there was not enough vaccine for everyone. Now, all the high-risk people have had the opportunity to get the vaccine. Everyone age 16 and older is encouraged to get the vaccine now. We appreciate your patience and putting others ahead of yourself when vaccine was in short supply.

Myth: I have heard stories of people still getting COVID-19 even though they were vaccinated. Does this mean the vaccine is not that effective?

Fact: There has never been a vaccine that is 100% effective. We expect to see a very small number of people get infected even after they have been fully vaccinated. In these cases, a fully vaccinated person greatly reduces their chances of serious illness or death because of the vaccine.



Still have questions or want to learn how you can schedule a vaccine appointment?

Visit us on our website: <https://claycountymn.gov/462/Public-Health> or scan the QR code below. If you would like to speak with someone in our public health department, call our vaccine hotline at 218-299-7204.

