https://www.amc.edu/capitalregionvax/

Don't Hesitate, Vaccinate!

The vaccine protects you and others from COVID-19.

The more people who receive the vaccine, the more protected we all are.

The vaccine builds herd immunity. A reported 70-90 percent of Americans must receive the vaccine to achieve herd immunity.

Vaccines have been proven to be highly effective at preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

COVID-19 VACCINE Q&A

It's safe. It's free. It works.

Q: Is the vaccine safe?

A: Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized and approved for use by the FDA, medical professionals and a New York State independent advisory task force. Both currently available vaccine are 95% effective. There are some minor side effects. They are signs that the body's immune response and the vaccine are both working. The vaccine is also safe for people with underlying health conditions. You are more likely to become ill without the vaccine.

Q: How is it determined who gets the vaccine and when?

A: New York State has formed a task force comprised of experts in public health, immunizations, government operations, data and other fields relevant to vaccine distribution and administration. This task force is advising on the operation of the state's COVID-19 vaccination program. The CDC also has issued guidelines that outline tiered distribution of the vaccine. **As soon as more detailed information is available about how, when and where members of our community can receive the vaccine, we will post it on this site. Please check back with us for this important information.**

Read more about tiered distribution

Q: Who is paying for the vaccine?

A: Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost.

Q: How many doses of vaccine do I need?

A: Two. You need an initial dose and a booster dose to have the full effect of the vaccine. The booster dose is given 21 days (Pfizer) or 28 days (Moderna) after the initial dose. The brand of your first dose will be the brand of your second.

Q: How long will the effects of vaccination last?

A: This is not known at this time. It is possible the initial doses of the vaccine will provide long-term or even lifelong immunity from COVID-19 or it may be that you will need to be vaccinated every year, similar to the flu vaccine.

Q: I had COVID already. Do I need a vaccine?

A: Yes. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long natural immunity lasts. There are no risks to receiving the vaccine based on whether you have already had the disease.

Q: Does it make a difference whether I receive the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine?

A: Not at this time. The recommendation is that you receive whichever vaccine is available to you when it's your turn to be vaccinated. Both vaccines are 95% effective, and both have similar side effects. The brand of your first dose will be the brand of your second.

Q: Can I get COVID from the vaccine?

A: No. This is not possible. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain live virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccines are designed 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 shortly after receiving the vaccine or the booster. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity. Learn more from the CDC about how COVID-19 vaccines work.

Q: Can the COVID vaccine alter my DNA?

A: No, it cannot. 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 are 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.

Q: Who cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: At this time, the vaccine can be given to New Yorkers 16 years old and older, including those with underlying health conditions and those who are immunocompromised. Research is currently underway to gauge safety and effectiveness in children. People with severe allergic reactions to vaccines in the past and those who have developed Guillain-Barre should consult with their physicians about whether it is advisable to be vaccinated. **This is yet another reason why all eligible adults should be vaccinated. It helps protect people who currently cannot receive the vaccine, including children.**

Q: Do I need to wear a mask when I am being vaccinated?

A: Yes. The CDC recommends that during the pandemic people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside your household, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Do I need to wear a mask and social distance once I receive two doses of vaccine?

A: For now, yes. Until we reach a point where community transmission of COVID-19 wanes or disappears, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least six feet away from others.

Q: How long will it take before we get back to normal?

A: Experts estimate it will take six to nine months before we reach herd immunity, a 70-90% vaccination rate, and life can return to normal. The good news is that we are on our way!