Vaccine to Prevent COVID-19

The COVID-19 vaccine can help you avoid getting COVID-19, a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can cause pneumonia and even death.

You may need two doses of the vaccine. And you might need "booster" doses later on to help you stay protected. The vaccine prevents most cases of COVID-19. But if you do still catch COVID-19, your symptoms will probably be less severe than if you hadn't gotten the vaccine. You can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The risk of serious problems from the vaccine is very low. And you might not have any side effects from the vaccine at all. If you do, they will probably be a lot like the common side effects of other vaccines. They include things like a slight fever, muscle aches, and soreness. These side effects don't last too long, and they can be treated if they bother you.

Who should get the vaccine?

Everyone who is able to get the vaccine should get it as soon as possible. The more people who get vaccinated, the better we'll be able to stop the spread of the virus.

The vaccine is extra important for people who are at high risk. This includes people who may be exposed to COVID-19 more often because of their jobs. It also includes people who are at high risk for complications from COVID-19 if they catch it. Some examples of people at high risk include those who:

- Work in health care.
- Are considered essential workers.
- Have certain health conditions.
- Are older than age 65.

If you've already had COVID-19, you may still be able to catch it again. Getting the vaccine may provide extra protection.

Why should you get the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is one of the best ways to help stop the pandemic. Getting vaccinated as soon as you can will help protect you from the virus. It will also help you protect people around you from the virus—people who could really be hurt.

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective. In fact, the risk of serious problems from COVID-19 is much higher than the risk of serious problems from the vaccine. So it's safer to get the vaccine than it is to catch COVID-19.

How can you care for yourself after getting the vaccine?

- If you have a sore arm or a slight fever after the vaccine, take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Read and follow all instructions on the label. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the sore area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, and follow all the steps for good hand-washing.