

Things to know about the COVID-19 vaccine.

A guide to learn why vaccines matter.

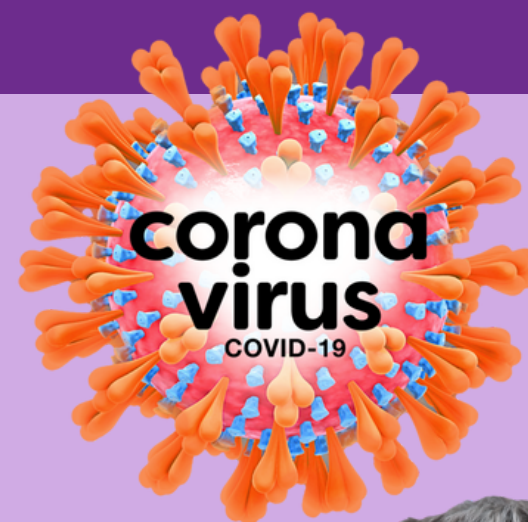


Health Care Access Research
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What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an **infection** caused by the **COVID-19 virus**, also called 'coronavirus'.



COVID-19 spreads when someone who has the virus **coughs, sneezes, talks** or is **close to another person**. It spreads easier when someone who is sick is not wearing a mask.



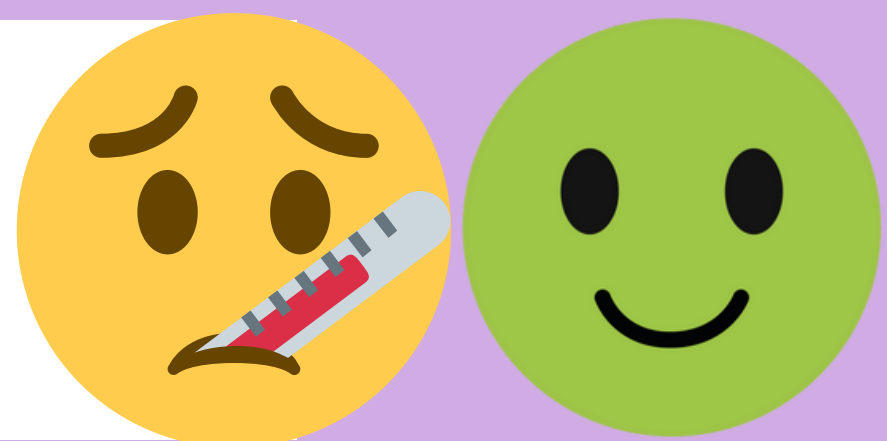
Some people can have the virus and not know it. But they can still spread it to others.



Common symptoms are: a cough, a runny nose, trouble breathing, fever, chills, tiredness, loss of taste or smell, a sore throat, headache, aches and pains.



COVID can make some people very sick and die, other people can get a little sick, and some people may not feel sick at all.

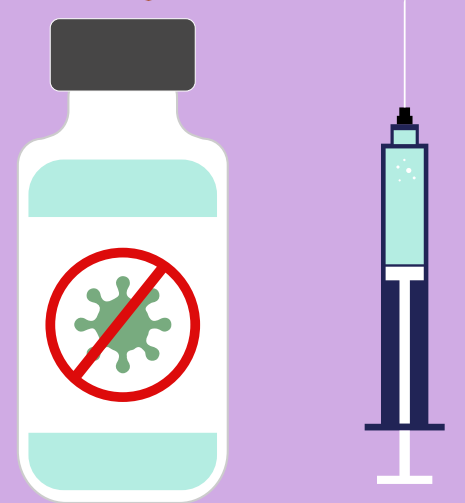


What is a COVID-19 vaccine?

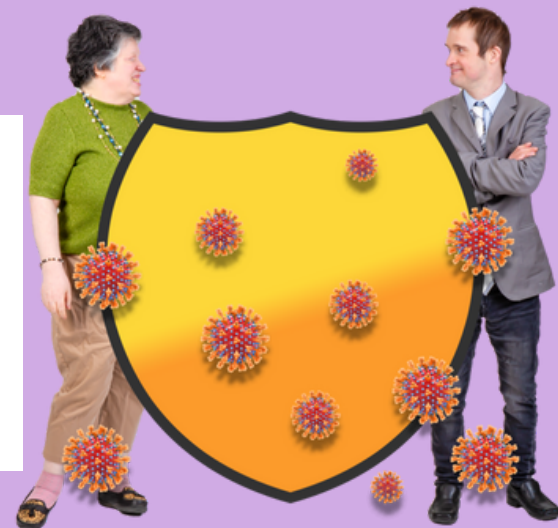
Scientists make vaccines to **protect** you and other people from **getting very sick** from viruses, like the COVID-19 virus.



We already get vaccines for other viruses, like the flu shot or a tetanus shot.



COVID-19 vaccines will make your **body stronger** and protect you from the COVID-19 virus.



Sometimes we need '**booster shots**' to update our protection against viruses. This **keeps us safe** from viruses for a long time.

There are now COVID-19 booster shots.



How does the vaccine work?

The COVID-19 vaccine gives your body a recipe to make part of the virus.

Your immune system then makes antibodies which protect you and learns how to fight the virus.

If you are exposed to COVID-19, your body will make more antibodies to fight the virus and will help you from getting very sick.



How did they do research to learn if the vaccine works?

Scientists tested the vaccine with lots of people. They gave all the people in the tests a needle.



In the tests, **some people** had the **COVID-19 vaccine** in their needle.



Then the **other people** had a needle that **did not** have a **COVID-19 vaccine** in it.

Then **scientists watched everyone** to see how they were feeling, if they had any side effects, if they got sick, and if they got the COVID-19 virus.



The **vaccine is safe**. **Doctors** and **scientists** have done **lots of work** to make sure the COVID-19 vaccine is safe.



I take some medications. Does the vaccine mix up with my medications?

Most people who take different medication do not need to worry about how their medications mix with the vaccine.

You should talk to your doctor or healthcare provider.

Can I be allergic to the COVID-19 vaccine?

Most people will not be allergic to the vaccine.

If you have experienced a very bad allergic reaction to a vaccine before, you should talk to your doctor.

The vaccine is still safe for most people who are allergic to other vaccines. This is because what is inside the COVID-19 is different than what is inside other vaccines.

There are some ingredients inside vaccines that a few people are allergic to. You can check if those ingredients are in this vaccine by talking to your doctor.

This guide was created by staff at the Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities Program (H-CARDD) and CAMH.

We thank the self-advocates worked with us to create this guide.

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