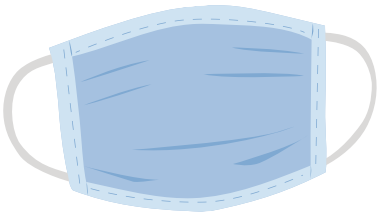
Vaccine Working Group on Ethics and Policy

COVID-19 VACCINE FAQS FOR TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

SHOULD I CONTINUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCE AND WEAR MASKS AFTER I GET THE VACCINE?



- Yes! The vaccine is not fully effective until about one week after the second dose
- Vaccination might not prevent the spread of COVID-19, so these measures are necessary to protect the communityy

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE?

- After receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, one may have some minor side effects
  - These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away in a few days
  - Many people experience no side effects
- Common side effects include pain and swelling on the injection site, fever, chills, tiredness, and headache throughout one's body
- More severe side effects can occur, yet they are rare and do not outweigh the benefits of the vaccine

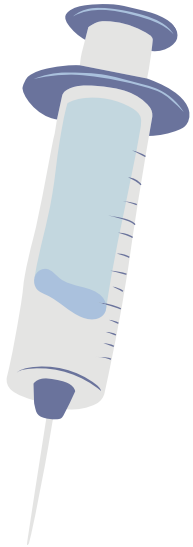
IS IT WORTH GETTING THE VACCINE IF I'M YOUNG AND HEALTHY?

- People under the age of 30 make up 20% of all COVID-19 cases
- Though the hospitalization rate is lower for young adults ages 18-34, many of those who are hospitalized required intensive care (20%), and there is a 3% death rate
- COVID-19 can cause chronic symptoms, such as chest pain and deep exhaustion
- The risks associated with being infected with COVID-19 are much more dire than the side effects of the vaccine

WHAT IF I'M TOO YOUNG TO GET THE VACCINE?

- Then continue to practice social distancing and face mask guidelines!
- Adolescents aged 16 and younger are not yet able to get the COVID-19 vaccine since there is insufficient research, and this group is considered to be the least at risk
- Pfizer is the only company authorized to vaccinate as young as 16 years old but has yet to distribute them to the general population of that age group
- One exception: people under 16 with underlying health conditions or who have come in contact with a COVID-19 patient may be eligible to receive the vaccine

CAN I GET COVID-19 FROM THE VACCINE? HOW DOES IT WORK?



- No, None of the authorized and distributed coronavirus vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 infection
- Instead, they contain genetic material that codes for a structure on the outside of the virus, called a spike protein
- Your immune system can then use the spike protein to form antibodies that will act as protection if you are ever exposed to the live virus
- The tested and approved COVID-19 vaccines leave your system with "memory" T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes (white blood cells) that will remember how to fight the virus should it ever appear in your system

WHY ARE THERE TWO DOSES?

- The first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine helps the body recognize the virus, and the second strengthens the body's immune response against the disease
- For the Pfizer vaccine specifically, the first shot was approximately 52% effective in preventing COVID-19, and with the second shot, efficacy increased to 95% It may take a few weeks after the first shot for your body to produce the necessary antibodies, so you need to continue taking precautions like wearing your face mask and social distancing
- The time between doses differs depending on the specific vaccine: Pfizer recommends waiting 21 days (with a 4-day grace period), and Moderna suggests 28 days
    - Not enough research has been done on how receiving vaccinations outside of this timeframe will change efficacy, so healthcare professionals suggest sticking to the recommended timeline

references: CDC, WHO, New York Times, Hopkins Medicine, AP News, GoodRx, Huffington Post