

COVID-19 FAQs

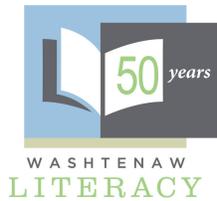
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General COVID-19 Questions

What are viruses?

Viruses are one of the simplest forms of life. They are strings of DNA or RNA covered with proteins and fats. DNA and RNA are like tape that carry instructions on how life should work. There are a large number of types of viruses and some of them cause illnesses in people.

What is a variant?

Just like a copy machine, when viruses make copies of themselves those copies may not be perfect. The DNA that gives the virus its instructions may undergo changes. Making copies of a copy over and over will lead to a lot of errors. Sometimes, these errors make the virus die and not be able to infect people. Sometimes, these errors help the virus get stronger or spread faster.

How can I protect myself from COVID and its variants?

You should follow CDC and local health department guidelines. Wear masks and social distance. Get vaccinated as soon as your county allows. If you have any special concerns, speak with your doctor to address them.

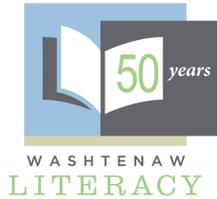
Should I be tested if I think I have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, call your doctor's office. Many people only have mild symptoms. They can recover at home without medical care and may not need to be tested. Your doctor will tell you what you need to do

Do masks and social distancing work to protect me from variants?

Yes.

When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others?



There is not enough known right now to decide when we can stop wearing masks and avoiding close contact.

What kind of mask(s) should I wear in public?

Any mask is better than no mask at all. This list of kinds of masks is ranked with the best option first:

1. KN95 or N95 masks
2. Surgical masks
3. Cloth masks

What are the most common variants in the United States right now?

Omicron variant - what you need to know:

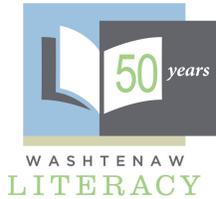
- May spread more easily than other variants, including Delta.
- The severity of illness and death should not be as bad if you're vaccinated, but it is not good if you're unvaccinated.
- Breakthrough infections (infections that happen despite being vaccinated) are expected. However, vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death.
- Fully vaccinated people who are infected with the Omicron variant can spread the virus.

Delta variant - what you need to know:

- Spreads more easily than other variants.
- May cause more severe cases than the other variants.
- Breakthrough infections (infections that happen despite being vaccinated) are expected. However, vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death.
- Fully vaccinated people who are infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus.

Are there other variants of the virus that causes COVID-19?

Yes. However, these variants are the most concerning in the United States right now.



COVID-19 Vaccines

What You Need to Know

Why should I get vaccinated?

Vaccinations protect against diseases that can spread from one person to another. When you get vaccinated, it is not only protecting you, but it is also protecting those around you.

Sometimes a vaccinated person can still get sick. The vaccine should prevent you from needing to be hospitalized.

How can one person getting vaccinated protect others around them?

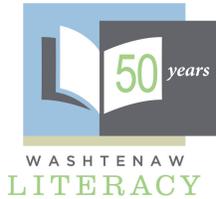
When you get vaccinated, you are breaking a path a virus can have to move through society. When most of the community gets a vaccine, most of the pathways a virus can take get blocked. This protects those who may be unable to get vaccinated due to health reasons. This only works when 90 to 95% of the population gets the vaccine.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by telling your body what is dangerous. Think of it as a “Wanted” poster for your body’s immune system. Your immune system protects your body against threats that could make you sick. It can remember and recognize threats it has seen before. The vaccine provides your immune system with proteins or other such material that shows it what a threat looks like. Then your immune system is able to set up defenses against threats faster.

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are safe. Scientists and doctors develop vaccines and test them well. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves them before people get them.



Is the covid vaccine safe even though it was approved much earlier?

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe even though it was approved quickly. The vaccine was developed using methods and information that already existed. Scientists all over the world worked together and shared information about their findings. Scientists were able to research the vaccine faster because more supplies were available. New technologies have helped scientists make vaccines much faster than in the past.

How many shots of COVID-19 vaccine do I need to get?

You will need to get at least two shots. You should get a “booster shot” after your primary dose. Your doctor’s office will tell you when to come back for your shots.

What is a booster shot?

A booster shot is an extra dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. They are recommended because eventually the vaccine stops working as well and may not protect against a new strain.

If we need a booster shot, are the vaccines working?

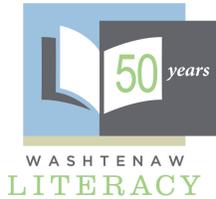
Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection over time, especially among certain populations.

Do I need to wear a mask when I get the vaccine?

Yes. You need to wear a mask when you are around other people. If you have trouble breathing with a mask on, you should not wear a mask. If you are not able to take a mask off without help, you should not wear a mask.

Do I need to pay for the vaccine?

You do not have to pay to get the COVID-19 vaccine.



I have already had COVID-19 and recovered. Do I still need the vaccine?

Getting sick with COVID-19 offers some protection from future illness with COVID-19, sometimes called “natural immunity.” The level of protection people get may vary depending on how severe their illness was, the time since their infection, and their age.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine gives most people a high level of protection against COVID-19, even in people who have already been sick with COVID-19.

New evidence shows that getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection provides added protection to your immune system.

Will the vaccine work on the new mutations of COVID-19?

Yes. The vaccines were made so that they would also work on mutations. When you get vaccinated you will have less chance of getting really sick.

Can I still get and transmit COVID if I’m fully vaccinated?

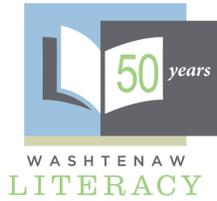
Yes. You can still get COVID and give it to others, even if you are vaccinated. However, getting vaccinated reduces your chances of getting COVID and should reduce the severity of symptoms.

How long will I be protected once I have the vaccine?

Immunity for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines starts to decline after 5 months. Immunity for the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine starts to decline after 2 months. This is when you should get a booster dose of the vaccine. We need more information to say how long immunity will last after the booster.

Variants can reduce vaccine effectiveness. Should I wait for a better vaccine?

No. While current vaccines may be less effective against some variants, they still do a good job at protecting you. By protecting yourself, you are protecting others.



What will I feel after a vaccine?

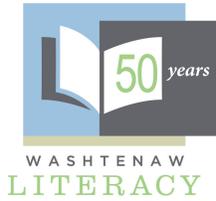
You may have some symptoms after getting a vaccination. These might make you feel sick for a few days, but it is just the vaccine working inside of your body to protect you. You may have sore arms, headaches, mild fevers, body aches, and tiredness after getting the COVID vaccine. These symptoms are temporary and not dangerous.

How long will symptoms last after getting a vaccine?

The symptoms you may feel after a vaccine usually last around 2 to 4 days, but can rarely last up to a week. Vaccine symptoms are not dangerous and are temporary.

Will there be enough of the vaccine for everyone?

Many medical companies are working on making the vaccine. When the vaccines are ready, they are sent to doctor's offices. Some groups will be able to get the vaccine first. Eventually, everyone will be able to have the vaccine.



COVID-19 Testing FAQs

What is a viral test?

A viral test is to see if you have COVID-19 right now.

How can I get a viral test?

Call your doctor. Your doctor will be able to tell you what your choices are to get a test.

What does my viral test mean?

A positive test result means you have COVID-19. A negative test means you probably did not have COVID-19 when you got the test.

If you test positive for COVID-19, stay home as much as you can. Stay away from other people in your home. Call your doctor's office if your symptoms get worse. If you can't stay away, wear a mask.

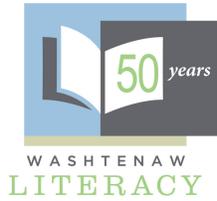
Even if you have a negative test result, you should still be careful.

- If a test was done too early, you could have COVID-19 and get a negative test result.
- You could get COVID-19 after getting the test.

If you test negative and have symptoms later, you might need to get another test.

What is an antibody test?

An antibody test is to see if you have had COVID-19 already. When your body fights off a virus, it creates antibodies. These antibodies stay in your body after the illness is gone.



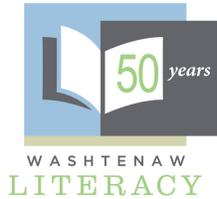
How can I get an antibody test?

Call your doctor's office to ask if they have antibody tests and if you should get one.

What does my antibody test mean?

If you have a negative test for antibodies, you might have not had COVID-19.

If you have a positive test for antibodies, you may have had COVID-19. Antibodies can help protect you from the virus. Doctors do not know how long you will have antibodies. They do not know how well antibodies will protect you.



Resources

Information about Moderna vaccine -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html>

Information about Pfizer vaccine -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html>

Information about Janssen vaccine -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/janssen.html>

Further details about m-RNA vaccines -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

Further details about recombinant (aka viral vector) vaccines -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/viralvector.html>

More information about SARS-CoV-2 variants:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant-classifications.html#anchor_1632150752495

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/variant-surveillance/variant-info.html>

Geographical distribution of the variants over the USA -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>