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Let science — and your heart — be your guide.

Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

I got the vaccine — for my love of exploring the world.

"I got the COVID-19 vaccine because I'm an avid traveler. If this brings me closer to being able to travel more and have my life back, it's worth it."

— **Danita Gainer**
Human resources development coordinator, UF Health

The vaccine is being distributed to individuals across the state, starting with people who are most at risk for getting sick. When it's your turn to get the vaccine, here's what you need to know.

How the COVID-19 Vaccine Works

For some people, COVID-19 can be mild. However, it can cause serious complications or death for others — including healthy people. The vaccine plays an important role in helping to prevent or reduce the effects of COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection, but with all types of vaccines, the body is left with a supply of "memory" cells that will remember how to fight that virus in the future.

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to make antibodies after vaccination. These antibodies are the shields that help prevent COVID-19 and its symptoms from becoming dangerous. It is possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to provide protection.

What is Herd Immunity?

Prevention is key to helping end the pandemic. Experts say that 75% to 85% of the population needs to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity. When enough people develop immunity to a disease, the disease can't spread in the community. This usually occurs through vaccination. Some people can't get vaccinated due to their health risks or access to health care. It's especially important to protect these people by getting vaccinated. Herd immunity protects all of us.

Learn more at Coronavirus.UFHealth.org

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The Science Behind the Vaccine

The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for making sure that any authorized vaccines are safe and that they work. This process can take many months to accomplish, but because of an unprecedented scientific effort, financial support and willing volunteers, researchers were able to test the vaccine on large groups of people much faster than ever before. They were able to complete this work in six months, with no safety steps skipped in the process.

Are There Side Effects?

Sometimes after vaccination, the process of building immunity can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that your body is building immunity against COVID-19.

You might experience some side effects after receiving the vaccine that last a day or two, including:

- Chills
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle and/or joint pain
- Redness, swelling and/or pain at the injection site
- Vomiting

Cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose are not expected symptoms of the vaccine. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended even if these symptoms arise within 48 hours of the vaccine.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE SIDE EFFECTS

If you experience any persistent or moderate to severe side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, please contact your primary health care provider. You may also need to be tested for COVID-19 if symptoms persist for more than 48 hours.

In addition, please report these side effects to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC. Visit cdc.gov/vsafe or scan the QR Code below using your smartphone to learn more.

Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine at Coronavirus.UFHealth.org

v-safe℠
after vaccination
health checker

Screen. Test. Protect.
UF HEALTH SCREEN, TEST & PROTECT

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