

## COVID-19 VACCINES: MYTHS VS FACTS

By

Mark N. Monroe, M.D.

As of beginning of April 2021 over 25% of adult Americans have been vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. A total of 85% of the populations has to be vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity. A Kaiser Family Foundation poll in late February found out that 44% of US adults are still on the fence or undecided about getting vaccinated: 22% wanted to see how the vaccines are working, 7% will get the vaccine only if it's required, and 15% said they definitely will not get the vaccine. There are many rumors and myths circulating about the vaccines:

- The vaccines are dangerous. The fact is that during clinical trials, all 3 vaccines have been found to be exceedingly safe with headache, fatigue, and injection site arm pain being the most common side effects. Other temporary side effects included flu-like symptoms such as fever, body and muscle aches, and diarrhea all resolved within 1 to 2 days. These side effects are due to the body's own immune system being activated to make antibodies against the virus. Rare severe reactions such as anaphylaxis have been reported and successfully treated with Benadryl, Epi pen, or steroids. The rate of anaphylaxis is the same as you would see in other flu and other vaccinations. Deaths have occurred, but are extremely rare.
- Vaccines don't work. In January of 2021, I was seeing about 6 positive cases of COVID-19 daily. Since March 1<sup>st</sup>, I haven't had any positive cases. The effectiveness of the vaccines in clinical trials were 95% for Pfizer and Moderna after the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot, and average of 72% for Johnson and Johnson. According to the Orange County Register, the COVID cases in Fountain Valley are 30+ and Huntington Beach 100+ compared to 1000s in the beginning of the year. The hospitals have been able to be opened up for elective surgeries and now single visitors are allowed.
- If you already survived COVID, you are not going to get it again. Fact is that after you have been exposed and successfully survived COVID, your natural antibodies will last about 90 days, whereas the antibodies will last up to 1 year after being fully vaccinated. This means that there will be annual booster vaccine just like flu vaccine.
- There are so many variants and mutations, eventually the virus will get us anyway. Fact is the most prevalent variant in US is the UK variant. Currently, the vaccines are effective against the UK, California, and Florida variants. The vaccines do not seem to be very effective against South African and Brazilian variants, but they lessen the severity by mobilizing the body's immune response.
- There is not enough vaccine for everybody. The fact is the Federal government purchased 700,000,000 doses of the vaccine which is enough for everyone. Pfizer has applied to the FDA for the approval to use their vaccine on children down to 12 years of age.
- The vaccine can make you infertile. The fact is it has not been shown to affect the fertility in the child bearing population.
- The vaccine cannot be used in pregnant or nursing women. The fact is the American College of Gynecology does recommend that all are vaccinated.

The benefits of the vaccines far outweigh the possibly deadly COVID infections. As always, your family physician will be the best one to advise you.