

RESPONSE & RECOVERY **IN ACTION**

Your monthly resource for COVID-19 strategies and tools from NACHC, our health center community, and partners

(continued)

COVID-19 VACCINE Q&A CORNER

IF SOMEONE HAS AN ALLERGY TO FOOD, MEDICINE OR A PREVIOUS VACCINE, SHOULD THEY GET THE SHOT?

People with allergies have a higher risk of an allergic reaction to the vaccine. They should be monitored throughout the vaccine delivery if they get a shot, with appropriate medication and support available to them in the event of a reaction. A determination of relative risk is important in deciding if a vaccine is the right choice.

IS IT SAFE FOR PEOPLE WITH IMMUNOCOMPROMISED DISEASES TO GET VACCINATED?

People with HIV and those with weakened immune systems due to other illnesses or medication might be at increased risk for severe COVID-19. They may receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, they should be aware of the limited safety data for this patient population. People living with HIV were included in clinical trials, though safety data specific to this group are not yet available at this time. People should talk to their health care provider to confirm the COVID-19 vaccine is right for them.

IS IT SAFE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE IF I HAVE AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.

HOW LONG DOES IMMUNITY FROM THE VACCINE LAST?

We only know it lasts as long as it has been tested thus far, which is at least 4-6 months. Testing will continue in the original group of vaccinees and will tell us more with time. The same goes with immunity from natural infection—we do know that some people have caught COVID-19 twice.

WILL MUTATIONS IN THE VIRUS MAKE VACCINES INEFFECTIVE?

There is no evidence that mutations in this virus change vaccine effectiveness. COVID-19 mutates more slowly than flu and with less significance to overall function. Vaccine targets preventing infection by the virus. The mutations have not addressed that feature.

FAQ responses were adapted from the following CDC coronavirus website pages: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/faq.html and www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html

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