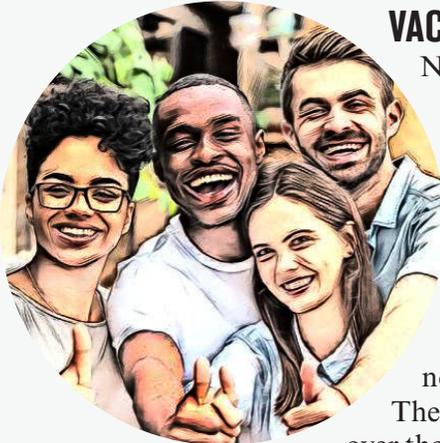


Frontline News

1199 MEMBERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



VACCINES MAY OFFER LONG-TERM PROTECTION FROM COVID-19

New evidence suggests the vaccine may provide longer-term protection than first thought. Health experts originally speculated that we may need an annual or occasional “booster” shots to maintain Covid-19 vaccines’ effectiveness at protecting us from the illness. Now that seems less likely. Because both the virus and vaccines were relatively new, scientists didn’t know how effective the vaccines would be over the long haul. With more and more people taking the vaccine, there are now signs we may not need additional shots. The study of the vaccines’ long-term effectiveness only looked at the two-dose Moderna and Pfizer vaccines and did not review the results of the Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccine.

The results suggest that a vast majority of vaccinated people will be protected over the long term—at least, against the existing variants. But older adults, people

with weak immune systems and those who take drugs that suppress immunity may need boosters.

The best results were for people who had Covid-19 and later took the vaccines. For these people, they may never need another vaccine. *As time goes on and more people take the vaccines, we are learning they are safe, effective, and long lasting.*

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DELTA VARIANT?

The Delta Variant a version of the coronavirus that has been found in more than 80 countries since it was first detected in India. It is well understood that viruses constantly mutate, and most changes aren’t concerning. But there is a worry that some variants might

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evolve enough to be more contagious, cause more severe illness or evade the protection that vaccines provide. Experts say the Delta Variant spreads more easily because of mutations that make it better at latching onto cells in our bodies. In the United Kingdom, the variant is now responsible for 90% of all new

infections. In the U.S., it represents 20% of infections, and health officials say it could become the country’s dominant type. Dr. Anthony Fauci has called the Delta Variant “the greatest threat in the U.S. to our attempt to eliminate COVID-19.” Fauci noted that the number of infections being caused by the variant is doubling every two weeks. According to some experts, it’s not clear yet whether the variant makes people sicker, but studies have shown that the available vaccines work against the Delta Variant. Dr. Fauci said the prevalence of the variant makes it more urgent than ever for people to roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated. Particularly as the country moves through the pandemic and back to normal. You can read more about the Delta Variant and Dr. Fauci’s recommendations here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/06/22/1008859705/delta-variant-coronavirus-unvaccinated-u-s-covid-surge>

VACCINATIONS MUST REMAIN VOLUNTARY

In order to protect ourselves, our families, our residents and patients, and get our lives back to normal, most of us need to take the Covid-19 vaccine. Some employers are considering requiring or mandating employees take the vaccine, but most experts agree that is not the best way to achieve the highest level of vaccine rates. There are four keys to achieving high vaccination rates.

- **Remove practical barriers to immunization.** The biggest barrier to getting vaccinated is access to the vaccine including distance to vaccine sites, time off from work, or limited hours. New York recognized this issue and passed a law that provides employees with up to four of our paid leave per injection.

- **Re-imagine how we talk about vaccines.** We do not condemn people who are still hesitant to take the vaccine. Instead, we provide accurate information and tell our own stories about taking the vaccine.

- **Celebrate uptake.** We tend to do what we think is common and accepted and, as healthcare workers, people follow our example. Showing the community that healthcare workers everywhere are getting vaccinated provides a great example that everyone is doing it.

- **Keep testing the results.** Each month we see more evidence the vaccine is safe and effective which continues to build confidence in the vaccine.

Forcing employees to take the vaccine can backfire and we know there are more effective ways to encourage everyone to take the vaccine.