COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

The following questions are raised regularly. Answering them directly and being able to provide trustworthy sources where people can research further is important.

1. **What's in the vaccines and how do they work?**

Each vaccine contains a key ingredient that prepares your immune system to fight the virus, and a few other basic ingredients like fats, potassium chloride and sucrose. One thing <u>that's not</u> in these vaccines is a weakened version of the virus. All three vaccines work by giving your immune system instructions on how to recognize the virus and how to fight it. None of the vaccines change your genetic code or DNA. You can go to vaccines.gov or DeTiDepende.org for detailed information, in Spanish and English, about every ingredient in each of the vaccines and what they do.

2. **How much does the vaccine cost and what sort of identification or documents do I need?**

The vaccine is completely free for every person in Colorado and the United States, including immigrants without documentation. While you might be asked for your insurance information, your insurance cannot bill you, and you will not be asked to pay anything to receive the shot. You may be asked to show a form of identification, but if you don't have one, you can say so, and you cannot be turned away. You will not be asked to show proof of citizenship.

3. **How did they develop these vaccines so quickly?**

Medical researchers have used mRNA technology for over a decade to fight cancer and viruses like SARS. These successes enabled medical researchers and doctors to develop these COVID vaccines in record time.

4. **How do we know the vaccines work and how do we know they're safe?**

All three vaccines currently approved by the FDA were thoroughly tested and proved to be safe and effective. The tests included more than 119,000 volunteers from racially diverse groups. All trials showed that the vaccines are safe, including for pregnant and breastfeeding women, with very few patients having any serious negative reaction. All three vaccines nearly eliminate the risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death from the virus. To date, more than 100 million people in America have received at least one dose of a vaccine, with very few people reporting severe side effects. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends the COVID vaccines for all pregnant and lactating women, as well as for people who may consider future pregnancy.

5. **Are there side effects?**
   As with any vaccine, some side effects are possible – but these side effects are manageable and typically minor. For example, you might temporarily experience fatigue, a headache, chills, or muscle and joint pain for one or two days. A reaction does not mean anything is wrong. It's actually an indication that your immune system is ramping up.

Trusted, vetted COVID-19 vaccine resources:

National sources
➔ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.CDC.gov
   ◆ Vaccine-specific link: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/
➔ US Department of Health and Human Services: www.vaccines.gov
➔ World Health Organization Vaccine Safety Q&A:
   https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines-safety
➔ Ad Council and COVID Collaborative, It's Up To You Campaign: www.GetVaccineAnswers.org
   ◆ Spanish-language link: www.DeTiDepende.org
➔ Kaiser Family Foundation and the Black Coalition Against COVID, The Conversation: Between Us, About Us Campaign: www.BetweenUsAboutUs.org

Colorado-specific sources
➔ Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: https://covid19.colorado.gov
   ◆ Media contacts and latest news: https://cdphe.colorado.gov/public-information
   ◆ COVID dial dashboard across all counties: https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial-dashboard
   ◆ Vaccine and distribution data: https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine
   ◆ COVID communications resource: https://covid19.colorado.gov/communication-resources
➔ Immunize Colorado COVID vaccine FAQs:
   https://www.immunizecolorado.org/healthcare-professionals/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-faq

Sources on increasing equity and addressing vaccine hesitancy
➔ Colorado Vaccine Equity Task Force: www.coloradovaccineequity.org
➔ RouteFifty - Building Trust in the COVID-19 Vaccine Among People of Color:
   www.route-fifty.com/health-human-services/2021/03/building-trust-covid-19-vaccine/172874/