



## In brief:

### The case for the COVID-19 vaccine

**Welcome to Illuminate**, our next-gen, interactive educational platform designed to inform professionals and key decision makers about the most important issues facing the industry today by shedding light on an ever-growing body of knowledge.

Much of the fog of the global pandemic that gripped the world throughout 2020 began to clear when the first shipments of lifesaving vaccines were distributed in early December to long-term care facilities and our nation's frontline healthcare workers.

And as that year of uncertainty began gaining clarity at the dawn of 2021, increasing numbers of Americans began warming to the idea of taking the COVID-19 vaccine, according to a [nationwide poll](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation, which found that nearly three-quarters of Americans expressed confidence in getting inoculated – up a full 10 points from just the month before.

Experts credit much of the groundswell to the vaccines' unprecedented safety record and extremely mild side effects

not unlike those from common flu shots. Moreover, the federal government has significantly strengthened its vaccine safety monitoring protocols with V-Safe, a new tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins.

The protocols also call for rapid cycle analysis, which regularly monitors older populations and other demographic groups to proactively identify and address any emerging safety concerns.

According to the CDC, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines are becoming available only after rigorous testing in large, well-designed studies, and under the same rigorous, multi-phased testing process as every other vaccine in history. Medical experts and career public health officials, not politicians, will decide when a COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective, and ready for public use.

Following are major vaccination concerns that scientists and clinicians believe should be put to rest.

***The speed at which the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed could mean that unnecessary shortcuts were taken that could make them unsafe or ineffective.***

“Over a 20-year period, the FDA approved 57 vaccines and out of the 57, only one vaccine was withdrawn,” said John Schulte, vice president, quality improvement, Argentum. Moreover, researchers have been studying the novel spike proteins of the coronavirus during several pandemics over the past 15 years. Experts attribute the success of the rapid rollout to an unmatched level of dedicated government resources, a vaccine development technology utilizing utilizing mRNA, and because top medical experts have made it their highest priority.

***Emerging variants of the COVID-19 vaccine, including the most recent so-called “UK variant,” could render existing vaccines ineffective.***

False. “Based on preliminary data, public health officials say they are confident the vaccines will provide a measure of protection against all known variants of COVID-19 going forward,” Schulte said.

***COVID-19 and its vaccines disproportionately affect certain demographics, or populations, such as under-served communities.***

According to Stephen Creasy, PharmD, PharMerica director of clinical services, the side effects of the vaccine are statistically the same across all ethnic groups. As Schulte explained, non-essential healthcare workers have been prioritized for vaccination because those occupations typically work more closely with people who might be infected; the virus doesn’t consider socioeconomic factors or other demographics before infection.

***A person will be infected with COVID-19 after taking the vaccine.***

The vaccines themselves will not cause a COVID-19 infection because none contain a live virus, or even a complete copy of the virus. According to the CDC, however, it takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination, and an individual could become infected because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection. It also hasn’t yet been determined how long the immunity duration is, Creasy added.

***The side effects from the vaccine have been severe.***

Early analysis of the first 272,000 vaccinations found that anaphylaxis, the most severe side effect, only occurred in six individuals, according to Creasy. Moreover, only 1% of all vaccinated individuals to date have experienced “health impact events,” or side effects that temporarily disrupt normal activities, he added. As Schulte stressed, vaccines can have considerable reactogenicity and still be considered highly safe. “In fact, those side effects can sometimes help boost the immune response we get from the vaccine,” he added.

***Closing arguments***

The medical and scientific communities are united in asserting that COVID-19 vaccines are an essential part in bring closure to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Other key success factors include wearing a mask, staying at least six feet from others, avoiding crowds, and washing hands frequently.

“There’s only one way this pandemic ends and that’s when the virus runs out of people to infect,” said Creasy. “The more individuals who choose to receive the vaccine, the more we can break the chain of virus transmission and get through this.”



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