

COVID-19 Vaccine Education

Why is WLC recommending that you receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccine protects you and other Warriors. Further, widespread vaccination will help achieve “herd immunity” which will limit community spread. Reference [John Hopkins University](#) for more information.

How do the COVID-19 vaccines work? The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use state-of-the-art technology to introduce a mRNA into your muscle that tricks your muscle into producing a harmless viral protein. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine takes a more traditional approach by using a harmless virus that has been engineered to produce the same harmless protein as the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Either way, this viral protein “primes” your immune system to respond quickly and aggressively if you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 in the future.

Will the vaccine keep me from getting sick? Yes. Both [Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) report that their vaccines provide 94-95% lower risk (efficacy) of contracting symptomatic COVID-19 2-3 weeks after the second dose. The [Johnson & Johnson](#) vaccine provides 72% efficacy in the United States. By comparison, the seasonal flu vaccine provides 40-60% lower risk. All of these vaccines are very effective at preventing severe disease after the first dose.

Will the vaccine keep me from unknowingly spreading the disease to others?

Yes, and more research is still needed. Recent preliminary data show a [90% reduction](#) in risk of asymptomatic infections (7 or more days after the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine). While these data indicate that the vaccines will effectively reduce asymptomatic transmission, we must still follow the WI mask mandate.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes, the [FDA](#) approved these vaccines for emergency use only after they were tested for safety and efficacy in well-controlled clinical studies that involved over 74,000 combined participants. No significant safety concerns were [identified](#), including no indications of damage to the reproductive organs. As of February 23, 2021, over 200 million people have been vaccinated for COVID-19 worldwide.

Are there side-effects?

Yes, but they are [generally mild](#) and result from your immune system responding and creating antibodies. Typically more symptoms are reported after the second dose. Most symptoms go away after 12-24 hours.

- 68-75% experience pain soreness around the site of injection.
- 42-50% experience fatigue, headache and muscle pain.
- 14-27% experience nausea, fever, chills or joint pain.
 - By comparison, 34% of those receiving the seasonal flu vaccine report similar side-effects.
- 2.5 per 1,000,000 (very rare) experience a [severe allergic reaction](#) known as anaphylaxis.
 - Prior to receiving the vaccine, consult your health care provider if you have a history of allergic reactions.

Are there any ethical concerns I should be aware of?

Some of the COVID-19 vaccines in development around the world use human fetal tissue-derived cell lines in the production process. The two vaccines approved for use by the FDA in the United States ([Moderna](#) and [Pfizer](#)) do not. However, these vaccines were [tested](#) using HEK293 cells in early research and development phases (as are many other pharmaceuticals). The HEK293 cell line was [derived](#) from human fetal tissue almost 50 years ago in the Netherlands. HEK293 cells are considered to be “immortal” meaning they can replicate indefinitely. Immortal cell lines are not the same as fetal tissue. For this reason, the use of HEK293 cells does not increase the demand for aborted fetal tissue, one could [argue](#) instead that it actually may reduce it.

Will WLC require faculty, staff, or students to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

No. WLC is not mandating the vaccine for students, faculty, and staff. However, out of care and concern for your health and well-being, and to protect fellow Warriors and the larger community, you are encouraged to receive the vaccine when it becomes available to you. Note that some health care facilities may require students to receive the vaccine for on-site clinical experiences.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility?

No. Based on current knowledge, experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to impact one's fertility. There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. More information can also be found on [WebMD](#).

Additional Notes

- Information provided in this document has been reviewed by WLC's Vaccination Team.
- As more information becomes available, updates will be provided.
- If you have additional questions or concerns, please reach out to healthservices@wlc.edu.