1. What is a vaccine?

A product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections into a muscle, but can also be given by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

2. COVID-19 vaccines

The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna have received FDA approval under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Both are messenger RNA vaccines. These vaccines have strands of genetic material called mRNA inside a special coating. That coating protects the mRNA from enzymes in the body that would otherwise break it down. It also helps the mRNA enter the dendritic cells and macrophages in the lymph node near the vaccination site. mRNA can best be described as instructions for the cell to make a piece of the “spike protein” that is unique to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Since only part of the protein is made, it does not harm the person vaccinated but it does elicit a specific immune response that protects against a future COVID infection. After the piece of the spike protein is made, the cell breaks down the mRNA strands and disposes of them using its cellular enzymes. It is important to note that mRNA strands never enter the cell nucleus so they do not affect human genetic material.

A COVID-19 vaccine from Johnson & Johnson affiliate Janssen could soon be given an EUA. This is a non-replicating viral vector vaccine, which does not appear to require a booster shot.

3. Should I get vaccinated?

Yes, with very few exceptions. If you have had a severe reaction to any previous vaccine, please consult with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated or not.
4. Information on when, where and how to get your vaccine

Minnesota News and Outreach

Vaccine Connector

The Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector is a new tool that helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get their COVID-19 vaccine.

The Vaccine Connector will:

- alert you when you are eligible to receive a vaccine;
- connect you to resources to schedule a vaccine appointment; and
- notify you if there are vaccine opportunities in your area.

This tool is for all Minnesotans 18 years of age and older who have not yet been vaccinated. Insurance and identification are not needed, and signing up is free.

Sign up at Vaccine Connector. It is easy, safe, and secure.

Vaccine Connector Website

https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/

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