COVID-19 Vaccine: Fast Facts for Parents and Teens

What you need to know:

- **The vaccine is safe and effective.** The Pfizer-BioNTech has been rigorously tested through clinical trials and has been administered to millions of people across the globe for more than six months. It has been proven to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.
- **The vaccine is free and easy to get.** Ask your school nurse about locations near you or visit CoMo.Gov/CovidVaccine for a list of vaccinators in Boone County.
- **Getting vaccinated is easy.** Getting a COVID-19 vaccine takes about 20 minutes from start to finish: 5 minutes for the paperwork and shot, and 15 minutes of monitoring to make sure there are no adverse effects.
- **Mild side effects are normal and do not last long.** It is possible that you will experience mild flu-like symptoms for one or two days. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection against the virus.
- **The vaccine cannot give you COVID or change your DNA.** The Pfizer vaccine uses mRNA technology: the vaccine sends a message to the cells, teaching them how to recognize and fight against the virus, then it dissolves. Since the mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell where DNA lives, your DNA cannot be affected or changed.
- **The vaccine does not affect fertility.** According to the CDC, there is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems.
- **Plan for two doses.** This is a two-dose vaccine. At the time you receive the first dose, you'll make an appointment to receive the second dose 3 weeks later.
- **Give it two weeks**. It takes a bit of time for the body's immune response to accumulate and mature; full protection from the vaccine comes two weeks (14 days) after the *second* dose.
- **Already had COVID?** You can get the vaccine as soon as your isolation period ends unless you received an antibody treatment while infected. The vaccine is highly recommended as a stronger layer of protection even with natural immunity.

Benefits of getting the vaccine:

- **Protecting your teen's health and future.** Even young, healthy people have experienced severe illness and long-term effects from COVID-19. The vaccine prevents your child from having chronic health problems that can come from COVID-19.
- **One step closer to community immunity**. Getting vaccinated protects you, your family and friends, and the entire community.
- **No more quarantines.** Because vaccinated people don't have to quarantine after being exposed to someone who is infected with the virus, your child won't have to miss out on big events like summer camp, graduation or holidays.
- **Freedom to travel.** Once you're fully vaccinated, it's safe to travel domestically without a COVID test or quarantine before or after the trip. There are also many international travel destinations that are allowing fully vaccinated individuals to visit. So you can make summer vacations and study abroad plans!
- **Freedom to gather.** Teens will be invited to more gatherings, sleepovers and events especially as summer is upon us. It's been hard to balance letting them be a teen and wanting to mitigate their risk. You can have peace of mind that they can go to these, be fully protected and not have to quarantine if exposed once they are fully vaccinated.

For more information, please visit CoMo.Gov/CovidVaccine.