

# Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

## COVID-19 VACCINES: MYTHS VERSUS FACTS

September 2021

*Soghra Jarvandi, Associate Professor and Community Health Specialist*

*Bonnie Hinds, Health Specialist*

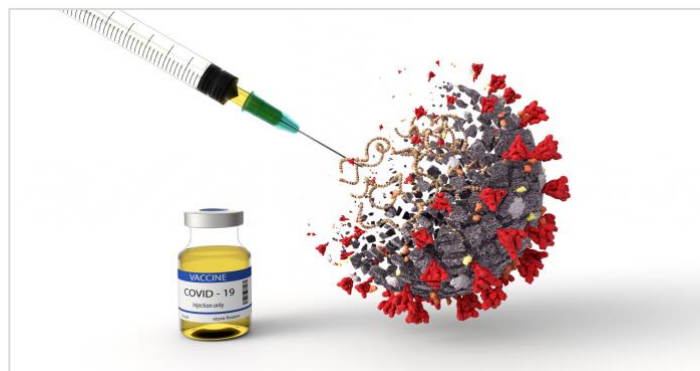
*Department of Family and Consumer Sciences*

**Myth:** Since the COVID-19 vaccines were rushed, they are not safe.

**Fact:** COVID-19 vaccines are safe. Although SARS-CoV-2 is a new virus, researchers already possessed a large body of knowledge on similar viruses within the coronavirus family. Scientific data and large-scale clinical trials showed the safety of the vaccines, thereby prompting the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) emergency-use authorization.

As of August, more than 170 million people in the United States have safely received COVID-19 vaccines. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the FDA continue to closely monitor issues related to vaccine safety.

Furthermore, on August 23, 2021, the FDA granted full approval to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for those 16 years of age and older. Henceforth, this vaccine will be known as Comirnaty.



**Myth:** COVID-19 vaccines will infect me with the virus.

**Fact:** Because the COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the live virus, there is no possibility that these vaccines can give you COVID-19.

**Myth:** COVID-19 vaccines will change my DNA.

**Fact:** COVID-19 vaccines will not change your DNA. These vaccines deliver materials that instruct your body to make a protein that activates the immune system. As a result, your immune system will develop a memory that tells your body how to fight the virus if you do come in contact with COVID-19.



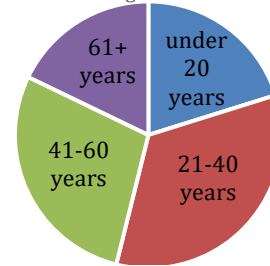
**Myth:** I am young and healthy, so I don't need to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Fact:** With the Delta variant, younger people are increasingly contracting COVID-19 and many are suffering severe complications.

In Tennessee, as of August 23, 2021, the proportion of all COVID-19 cases by age groups are:

- 20 percent in the age group under 20 years
- 34 percent in the age group 21-40 years
- 28 percent in the age group 41-60 years
- 18 percent in the age group 61 years and older

COVID-19 Cases in TN, By Age Group, August 2021



This graph was created based on the public datasets available on the Tennessee Department of Health website [www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/data/downloadable-datasets.html](http://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/data/downloadable-datasets.html)

**Myth:** I already had COVID-19, so I don't need to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Fact:** While it is true that COVID-19 results in some level of natural immunity, it is not known how long this immunity lasts. Recovered COVID-19 patients are, therefore, advised to seek COVID-19 vaccination. It is important, however, that these patients check with their doctors as to how long they should wait following their recovery.

**Myth:** COVID-19 vaccines are harmful during pregnancy.

**Fact:** According to the CDC, the vaccines are “safe and effective”, and “all pregnant people or people who are thinking about becoming pregnant and those breastfeeding [should] get vaccinated.”

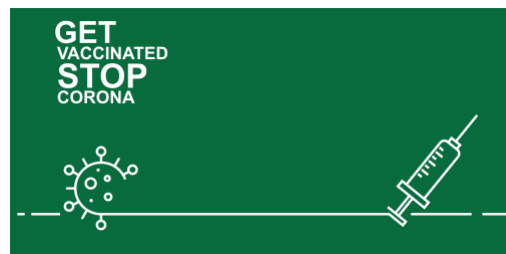
**Myth:** The COVID-19 vaccines have severe side effects.

**Fact:** The reported side effects of the vaccines are mild, including such symptoms as tiredness, headache, chills and muscle pain. These symptoms are indications that your immune system is responding as anticipated. Generally, the side effects are more pronounced following the second vaccine and usually disappear within a few days.

Serious side effects of COVID-19 vaccinations are rare but may occur. If your medical history raises concerns, consult your doctor.

**Myth:** COVID-19 is not a serious disease, so I don't need the vaccine.

**Fact:** While many people suffer mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms and recover, it is difficult to predict who will contract complications and severe forms of the disease, even within the same household. To adequately protect yourself, your loved ones and your community, **get vaccinated!**



Funding provided by Extension Foundation through the Extension Collaborative on Immunization Teaching and Engagement (EXCITE) initiative.



**UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU**

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.