



Is the vaccine a cure for COVID-19?

The **COVID-19 vaccine will boost the body's immune system to fight the virus.** The vaccine is not a cure. A cure would be a medication that is given to specifically kill the virus itself.

Vaccines contain either a weakened or killed form of the virus, part of the virus or genetic material that causes a specific response in the body to help it fight the virus. This means that the vaccine helps the body learn how to fight off the specific virus itself.

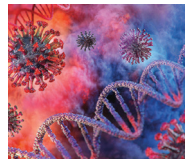


If someone had COVID-19 would they still need to take the vaccine?

Yes. It is recommended that people who have recovered from COVID-19 should take the vaccine. Some people who had the disease have gotten re-infected. This means that different people develop varying levels of natural immunity against this disease.

It is presently estimated that after 90 days of having the infection someone previously infected should have the vaccine.

Research on this is still ongoing and with time there may be revisions to this timeframe.



Does the COVID-19 vaccine change your DNA?

No it does not. Some COVID-19 vaccines contain genetic material, such as messenger RNA (mRNA) that signal certain white blood cells, to make proteins similar to those released by the virus. It is not the virus itself. When this happens the body's immune system will make antibodies and if exposed to COVID-19 in the future, can now defend against it.. This mRNA **does not** enter our cells or change the body's DNA or genetic material.



Is COVID-19 a hoax to help wealthy companies make more money?

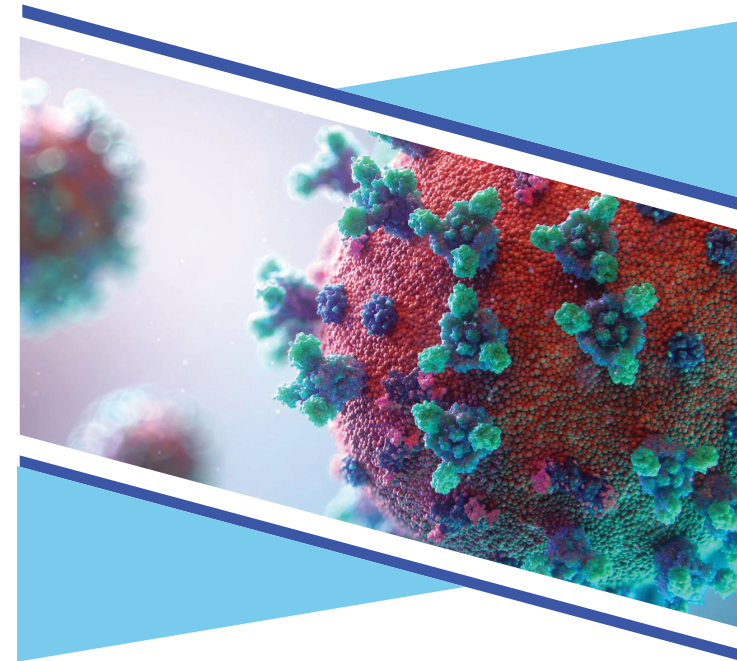
COVID-19 is real and has affected millions of people globally.

Companies doing vaccine research and development will benefit financially. More important than this is the need to focus on the role that the vaccine plays in bringing us back to some semblance of pre-COVID-19 normality.

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COVID-19 VACCINE FACT SHEET



Ministry of Health and Wellness
"Quality Health Care For Life"

Bureau of Health Education
Ministry of Health, Saint Lucia



How does the COVID-19 vaccine work to protect us?

Depending on the manufacturer, the vaccine may contain either; a dead or weakened form of the virus, part of the virus; or its genetic material. This would allow white blood cells to make proteins similar to those released by the virus. The body responds by creating fighter cells called antibodies that attack and kill the virus. It also boosts the body's ability to make a high number of fighter cells, than needed, giving us added protection. The vaccine does not infect persons with the virus.

If someone gets vaccinated, they gain protection from COVID-19. This is also referred to as immunity from COVID-19. Immunity occurs when the body knows exactly what to do to protect us against the virus.

With the immunity the vaccine gives, this means the virus is less likely to multiple in the body and makes it less likely to spread to others. It should be remembered that the virus is new, so studies are ongoing to determine how long immunity lasts. So it may mean, like some other vaccines, we may require booster doses in the future if the research shows that we lose immunity over time.



Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Before vaccines are approved they are tested to determine how safe they are and how well they work. This was done before the COVID-19 vaccine was issued for use.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also has a team of researchers and scientists who periodically review the vaccine for it's safety and effectiveness. Once the vaccine is determined to be safe, it

is qualified for use. **Saint Lucia will only use vaccines that are pre-qualified by the WHO.**

Even after approval is granted, strict regulations are in place to continue monitoring people's response to the vaccine.



Will we monitor use of the COVID-19 vaccine in Saint Lucia?

Yes. We have our own vaccine monitoring system in Saint Lucia. Anyone who takes the vaccine will be observed by the healthcare provider for about 15 minutes and asked to monitor themselves for any adverse effects at home. A number of things can cause adverse effects including an allergic reaction to a component in the vaccine. This is a similar approach to how people are observed for allergic reactions to certain medications.

If any significant or unusual reactions occur, the individual must inform the healthcare provider. When this is done, a report will be written and a health team will investigate the matter. The individual will be given the necessary care by the state.



How did COVID-19 vaccines receive approval in such a short space of time?

A number of factors have contributed to the vaccines being approved faster than previous vaccines.

- Research and development of vaccines for similar types of viruses like SARS, had already started for many years before COVID-19.

- The use of new scientific approaches that allow for faster development, than conventional methods which require months at a time of growing antigens in animal or insect cells.

- Increased levels of funding available to scientists to make the vaccine.

- The use of modern technology has made it possible to carry out various stages of the vaccine production process at the same time for example research and clinical trials take place simultaneously.

Similar to previously approved vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines safety will continue to be monitored throughout.



Will the COVID-19 vaccines Saint Lucia receives be of the same quality as those available in the more developed countries?

Saint Lucia will only use approved vaccines that are reviewed and pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO). Saint Lucia is being supported by a number of allies and is a member of the COVAX Facility. Through this Facility, resources are pooled to ensure that vaccines are available and shared fairly among participating countries around the world.

This Facility is led by:

- **The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI)**
- **The Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)**
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**