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 —  
**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**  
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**OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY  
 AND INCLUSION**

**Date: Tue, Mar 16, 2021**  
**Time: 5:15-6:15pm CT**  
**Where: Zoom**

## Women in Medicine and Science: Tackling COVID-19 Vaccine Myths

### What's true, what's myth, who should I believe?

Saint Louis University School of Medicine is partnering with experts to answer your questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. During this one-hour online seminar we will hear from experts in research, infectious disease, and family and community medicine on the facts about COVID-19 vaccines. The choice to be vaccinated for COVID-19 is a personal one. It's vital to ask questions and be informed with the latest information that will allow you to make a good decision for yourself.

- **Esmeralda Aharon, M.A.**, program director, staff and community engagement for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Saint Louis University School of Medicine.
- **Sharon Frey, M.D.**, clinical director of SLU's Center for Vaccine Development and principal investigator of the Moderna trial at SLU
- **Denise Hooks-Anderson, M.D.**, assistant dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and associate professor, Family and Community Medicine at Saint Louis University
- **Niva Lubin-Johnson, M.D., FACP**, an internal medicine physician based in Chicago, served as the 119th President of the National Medical Association (NMA) and serves as chair of the Women Physicians Section Governing Council for the American Medical Association (AMA)



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MYTH 1: You can delay routine vaccinations until the pandemic is over.

You shouldn't postpone your vaccinations.

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MYTH 2: The COVID-19 vaccines were developed too fast to be safe. There were not enough participants in the clinical trials to declare the vaccines safe.

The technology used to develop the new COVID-19 vaccines is not new.

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# MYTH 3: I already had COVID-19, so I do not need the vaccine.

It's not clear how long a natural infection with COVID-19 provides immunity from the disease. There are reports of individuals becoming reinfected with the virus.

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MYTH 4: COVID-19 vaccines were developed to deliver a microchip into my body. The vaccine will alter my DNA.

The vaccine does not contain a microchip. Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines work in the cell's cytoplasm and never enter the cell nucleus, where the DNA, your genetic material, lives.

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# MYTH 5: I will not need to wear a mask after I am vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccines protect you from getting seriously ill from COVID-19. But it's not known if the vaccine will keep you from being infected then transmitting the virus to others.

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# What are the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine? Do the COVID-19 vaccines contain aborted fetal tissue?

The active ingredient in both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is mRNA. The mRNA tells your cells how to make a protein from the coronavirus. Once your body knows how to make the protein, it can recognize COVID-19 and fight it off. The vaccines also contain lipids (fats), various salts, sucrose, and other stabilizing ingredients to help your body use the mRNA. No, the COVID-19 vaccines do not contain any aborted fetal cells. However, Pfizer and Moderna did perform confirmation tests (to ensure the vaccines work) using fetal cell lines. Fetal cell lines are not the same as fetal tissue. Fetal cell lines are cells that grow in a laboratory. They descend from cells taken from elective abortions in the 1970s and 1980s. No fetal cell lines were used to manufacture the vaccine, and they are not inside the injection you receive.

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# What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? Is there a risk of severe allergic reaction if I receive the vaccine?

You may have pain and swelling at the injection site and experience fever, chills, tiredness, and headache. Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Serious problems from vaccination can happen, but they are rare. There have been approximately 21 cases of anaphylaxis out of nearly 2 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, compared to 1-5 cases per 10,000 people given Penicillin.



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Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility?  
I am pregnant or plan to become pregnant,  
can I still get the vaccine? Are there  
additional risks for me?

It is especially important that certain eligible patient populations, including pregnant women, consult with their trusted physicians when considering whether to take the vaccine. ACOG recommends that COVID-19 vaccines should not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet criteria for vaccination based on ACIP-recommended priority groups.

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Where can I find the best source of information regarding pregnancy and COVID-19 vaccine?

ACOG.ORG and discuss with your provider.

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# What is the difference between Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines?

Pfizer and Moderna uses mRNA technology. Johnson & Johnson utilizes a viral vector technology.

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# Can you get Covid-19 once you get the vaccine? Can you transmit Covid-19 to someone else after getting the vaccine?

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. We don't yet know whether getting a COVID-19 vaccine will prevent you from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people, even if you don't get sick yourself. CDC will continue to update as we learn more.

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# How can people trust the vaccine in underprivileged communities with the history of being mistreated and tested on in the past?

The choice to be vaccinated for COVID-19 is a personal one. It's vital to have a relationship with your primary care physician and to ask questions and raise concerns until you have answers that allow you to make a good decision for yourself.

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# Why is diversity so important in clinical trials?

When people have different genetic and biologic makeup, their bodies can produce antibodies differently. This means to ensure a vaccine will protect people of all ethnic groups, we need to make sure everyone is fully represented in clinical trials

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# How has COVID-19 impacted women?

Unemployment data in the U.S. indicate that women make up 54 percent of the overall job losses to date. Mothers continue to shoulder the majority of family caregiving responsibilities and are faced with lack of childcare infrastructure and online schooling.

[Source: McKinsey & Company](#)



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What barriers have you encountered  
as a woman in medicine and research?

Sexism, racism, and microaggression.

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What advice would you give a young female doctor just starting out in her career?

Role of advocacy and negotiation.

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What communication skills do you use to increase rapport with patients and inform them about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Building trust and longitudinal relationships.

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# Which lasts longer, immunity after getting COVID-19 or protection from COVID-19 vaccines?

We don't know how long natural immunity might last. Current evidence suggests that getting the virus again (reinfection) is uncommon in the 90 days after the first infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. We won't know how long immunity lasts after vaccination until we have more data on how well COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions.

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# Where can I get a vaccine and when?

Visit [covidvaccine.mo.gov](https://covidvaccine.mo.gov) to find out when you are eligible to receive the vaccine and locations offering vaccinations. In the St. Louis area, selected health care systems include BJC Healthcare, SSM Health, Mercy St. Louis, St. Luke's Hospital and the St. Louis County Health Department.

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# WHEN CAN I GET VACCINATED?

The state of Missouri is currently working to vaccinate residents that are eligible under our phased approach.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

Phase 1A	Phase 1B	Phase 2	Phase 3
Long-Term Care Facility Residents and Staff	Tier 1 First Responders & Emergency	Accelerating Economic Recovery	All Missouri Residents
Healthcare Workers (Patient Facing)	Tier 2 High Risk Individuals	Disproportionately Affected Populations	
EMS/EMT/Paramedics	Tier 3 Critical Infrastructure	Homeless	



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### Phase 1B – Tier 1

Protecting those who keep us safe  
and help us during an emergency

Public Health Administrators and  
Staff  
Law Enforcement  
Fire Services  
Corrections  
Emergency Management  
Public Works  
Emergency Services

**Tier 1**

### Phase 1B – Tier 2

Protecting those who are at  
increased risk for severe illness

Anyone 65 and older  
Any adults with:

- Cancer
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- COPD
- Heart Conditions
- Weakened immune system due  
to organ transplant
- Severe obesity (BMI >40)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus
- Individuals with intellectual  
and/or developmental  
disabilities such as Down  
Syndrome

**Tier 2**

### Phase 1B – Tier 3

Protecting those who keep the  
essential functions of society running

Education (K-12)  
Childcare  
Communications Infrastructure  
Dams Sector  
Energy Sector  
Food & Agriculture Sector 1  
Government  
Information Technology  
Nuclear Reactor Sector  
Transportation Systems  
Water and Wastewater Systems

**Tier 3**



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# So, now what?

If you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.
- However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

[CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

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# Soul of a Storm

Poem by ©Ms Moem

She has the soul of a storm and the freedom of the wind.

She has eyes like the stars with moonshine within.

With the strength of the sea and lightning in her toes

She dances on the breeze of change wherever she goes.

Hotter than a volcano and deeper than the oceans

A whirling, swirling myriad of feelings & emotions.

She is daughter of the earth, primordially inspired.

She is water, she is wood. She is earth. She is fire!

# Resources

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) - [familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org)

BJC Healthcare - [BJC.org](http://BJC.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Illinois Department of Public Health - [dph.illinois.gov](http://dph.illinois.gov)

Mercy – [Mercy.net](http://Mercy.net) or 1-833-364-6777

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services - [health.mo.gov](http://health.mo.gov)

National Institutes for Health (NIH) - [nih.gov](http://nih.gov)

National Medical Association (NMA) - [nmanet.org](http://nmanet.org)

Regional Response Team - [FAQs](#)

SLUCare Physician Group - [SLUCare.edu](http://SLUCare.edu)

SSM Health - [SSMHealth.com](http://SSMHealth.com)

St. Louis City Department of Health - [stlouis-mo.gov](http://stlouis-mo.gov) or 314-615-2660

The Center for Black Health & Equity and American Lung Association - [Understanding Immunizations and the COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Vatican – [Vatican.va](http://Vatican.va)



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A recording of this webinar will be available on the News and Events page of our website.

Questions: [ODEI@health.slu.edu](mailto:ODEI@health.slu.edu)

