COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

Vaccines train our immune system to recognize the COVID virus and make cells to fight the virus.

2. What are the side effects of COVID-19 vaccines?

Most people who receive COVID vaccines experience few side effects. The most common side effects are:

- A sore arm where the shot was given
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle/body aches
- Chills
- New loss of taste or smell

3. How long will the protection of COVID-19 vaccines last?

The length of protection is currently unknown. Research is ongoing.

4. Can COVID-19 vaccines give me COVID-19?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. Instead, they cause your body to make antibodies to fight COVID-19.

5. Do the vaccines work on the new COVID variants?

Scientists are studying different forms, or variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 to see whether existing vaccines will protect people against them. CDC, in collaboration with other public health agencies, is monitoring the situation closely and will release more information when it is available.

6. Can people who are pregnant get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. People who want to get pregnant in the future can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Experts currently recommend that women who are pregnant or breastfeeding receive the COVID-19 vaccine. There is no evidence that fertility problems are caused by COVID vaccines. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID vaccine when it becomes available to them.

7. How long can the COVID-19 virus live on surfaces?

The COVID-19 virus can survive on various surfaces for different lengths of time. For example:

- Plastic: 2-3 days
- Cardboard: 2-3 days
- Stainless steel: 2-3 days
- Glass: 3 days
- Metal: 3 days

8. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for people who are pregnant?

Yes. The FDA and CDC have determined that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for people who are pregnant. However, more research is needed to fully understand the vaccine's safety and effectiveness in pregnant women.

9. Will the COVID-19 vaccine prevent me from infecting others?

The COVID-19 vaccine greatly reduces the risk that you will develop COVID-19. In clinical trials, COVID-19 vaccines have been highly effective at preventing severe cases of COVID-19 and hospitalization.

10. Do I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?

Yes! COVID-19 vaccines being used in the United States meet FDA’s rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Scientists do not yet know how long natural antibodies in people who have had COVID-19 will protect them from being re-infected.

11. Canfully vaccinated people start gathering again?

Yes. If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic. However, continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands regularly.

12. When is a person considered recovered from COVID-19?

A person is considered recovered from COVID-19 when they no longer have symptoms and test negative on a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for SARS-CoV-2. It’s possible to follow CDC social distancing guidelines or isolation or quarantine while awaiting test results.

13. How long can COVID-19 remain viable on surfaces?

The COVID-19 virus can survive on various surfaces for different lengths of time.

14. Where can I find more information about COVID-19 in South Dakota?

Learn more about COVID-19 in South Dakota at COVID.sd.gov