

How Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines Work

Understanding the virus that causes COVID-19.

Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called **spike proteins**. These **spike proteins** are ideal targets for vaccines.

What is a viral vector vaccine?

A viral vector vaccine uses a harmless version of a different virus, called a “vector,” to deliver information to the body that helps it protect you.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine teaches your body how to make copies of the **spike proteins**. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off.

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The vaccine **DOES NOT** contain the virus that causes COVID-19 and cannot give you COVID-19. It also cannot make you sick from the virus that is used as the vector. It cannot change your DNA in any way.

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When your body responds to the vaccine, it can sometimes cause tiredness, headache, muscle pain, nausea, or mild fever. These are normal signs the vaccine is working.

GETTING VACCINATED?

For information about COVID-19 vaccine, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)

