

**Should You Get the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

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Approximately 6 million people have died of COVID-19 in the past two years (Worldometer, 2022). This value is greater than the state of Minnesota population set at approximately 5.7 million (United States Census Bureau, 2022). If the death toll is this vast, why wouldn't you want to do everything in your power (aka obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine) to save your life and others? However, many are of the opinion the negatives outweigh the positives. For example, this vaccine is very recent, and they don't know what is being injected into their bodies. This can be very frightening, and cause innumerable individuals to not obtain the vaccine. Furthermore, some believe the COVID vaccine can even cause death, although there is not enough research and data to prove this. This possibility of death however is significantly lower than the millions of lives it's continuing to save. I believe everyone should get the COVID-19 vaccine because it will keep individuals protected from obtaining the virus, it's a safe way to build protection/immunity, it's an important tool to put a stop to the pandemic, it doesn't affect your DNA in any way, and finally if you do somehow catch the virus it protects you from becoming very ill. Moreover, I believe there are people who can be excluded from obtaining this virus. For instance, individuals who are of a young age, have strong religious beliefs, and more.

To begin, the majority have the belief that the COVID-19 vaccine is dangerous. They have this opinion as there isn't enough research done to prove it is safe for our bodies. In addition, it is also proven the vaccine doesn't have any effect on your DNA, which many also believe. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022) states, "These vaccines do not enter the nucleus of the cell where our DNA (genetic material) is located, so it cannot change or influence our genes." To elucidate, many decline obtaining the vaccine as they are frightened of what the vaccine might contain. They are even more frightened of what harm it could cause to their bodies. However, the CDC, our national public health agency, is funded by our government. This

means they have numerous funding for research and experimentation. Furthermore, they have the best of the best individuals working this agency, as it's government run. The research done by them is therefore highly credible and reliable. As an audience we can trust that the information they gathered, that the vaccine cannot affect our DNA and genes. The CDC (2022) adds,

While COVID-19 vaccines were developed rapidly, all steps have been taken to ensure their safety and effectiveness. Bringing a new vaccine to the public involves many steps including: vaccine development, clinical trials, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorization or approval. As vaccines are distributed outside of clinical trials, monitoring systems are used to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

This further proves that we can trust the CDC and the vaccine's contents will do no harm.

Moreover, the vaccine has undergone a lot of steps to make the best versions for consumers. Additionally, "COVID-19 vaccines saved an estimated 20 million lives in 1 year" (University Of Minnesota, 2022). A question to ask is if the vaccine is so harmful to our bodies we shouldn't get it, how have so many lives been saved? This quote from a University Of Minnesota study done just this past year, demonstrates how many lives have been saved. To further prove my point, only 9 people have been actually reported to have died from the vaccine (COVID-101, 2022). These reported deaths are caused from anaphylactic reactions, thrombosis, or myocarditis. Although according to CDC (2022),

Reports of death after COVID-19 vaccination are rare. FDA requires healthcare providers to report any death after COVID-19 vaccination to VAERS, even if it's unclear whether the vaccine was the cause. Reports of adverse events to VAERS following vaccination, including deaths, do

not necessarily mean that a vaccine caused a health problem. More than 653 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the United States from December 14, 2020, through November 24, 2022. During this time, VAERS received 17,640 preliminary reports of death (0.0027%) among people who received a COVID-19 vaccine.

To continue, the COVID-19 vaccine instead of being looked at as something negative for your health, is proven it can build up your protection and immunity. The CDC (2022) writes, “COVID-19 vaccines can offer added protection to people who had COVID-19, including protection against being hospitalized from a new infection, especially as variants continue to emerge”. To explain, by acquiring the vaccine it will aid you from becoming infected. As with any disease as severe as something like COVID-19, variants are very likely to emerge which can be more severe than the original symptoms of the disease. The vaccine will protect you from catching these variants and making you very sick. The vaccine in a sense protects you, builds your immunity.

Moreover, the individuals who are fearful they will still catch the virus even with getting the vaccine, it still protects you from getting severely ill, compared to others who didn’t obtain the vaccine at all. Many may believe that if they already have had the illness they don’t need to go and get the vaccine. Although, this proves to be incorrect as it is still very likely they can get reinfected, but it won’t be as likely if they got the vaccine. Mayo Clinic (2022) communicates, “Getting COVID-19 offers some natural protection or immunity from reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19. It’s estimated that getting COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination both result in a low risk of another infection with a similar variant for at least six months”. This

affirms that even though you may have already acquired the illness, it does not fully protect you from catching the virus again. To add,

Because reinfection is possible and COVID-19 can cause severe medical complications, it's recommended that people who have already had COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, COVID-19 vaccination might offer better protection than getting sick with COVID-19. A recent study showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than twice as likely as fully vaccinated people to be reinfected with COVID-19 (Mayo Clinic, 2022).

Illuminating on this quote we can see that getting the vaccine will keep you more safe than others who don't and already surviving the virus once doesn't mean you are safe.

To proceed, the more individuals who get the vaccine the more lives that will be saved and protected, which means a faster end to this long-lasting pandemic. Many particular individuals are of the opinion that the vaccine isn't necessary because of the concept of herd immunity. To interpret, these people are of the belief that once enough people get infected, the disease will no longer be around. Although, that concept comes with major risks, unless enough of the population is being vaccinated. This is also risky for populations who will die if they catch the virus. For example the elderly population, immunocompromised individuals, and pregnant women (Hopkins Medicine, 2022). The elderly tend to struggle the most with the virus as they tend to have more long term health issues, weakened immune systems, and their "Lung tissue becomes less elastic over time, so respiratory diseases like COVID-19 are particular concerns for older people" (Hopkins Medicine, 2022). The older aged population especially cannot obtain this virus, therefore making the herd immunity concept not of value.

On the other hand, herd immunity can only be beneficial for those who may not be able to receive the vaccine. Mayo Clinic (2022) expresses,

Herd immunity also can be reached when enough people have been vaccinated against a disease and have developed protective antibodies against future infection. Unlike the natural infection method, vaccines create immunity without causing illness or resulting complications. Using the concept of herd immunity, vaccines have successfully controlled contagious diseases such as smallpox, polio, diphtheria, rubella and many others.

Herd immunity is a good way to cause an end to a pandemic, but only if done correctly. This means, you have to take the step to go and obtain the vaccine. Herd immunity can cause many deaths to the unvaccinated if you are immune compromised, very old, or even healthy and a good age, you can still be greatly affected. To continue, “Herd immunity makes it possible to protect the population from a disease, including those who can't be vaccinated, such as newborns or those who have compromised immune systems” (Mayo Clinic, 2022). This quote proves there are many who may not be able to get vaccinated like newborns or people who have unique immune systems, but herd immunity can help aid them. It does more good if others around them are taking the step to attain the vaccine. To conclude, if the majority of the population is vaccinated and not getting ill, it will also help them to not spread the illness as they cannot catch it. The process of herd immunity will be much more pleasant and the population who can't receive the vaccination will still safely be a part of this process.

Finally, you taking the step to get the vaccine not only protects others, but it protects your valuable life. It's ok to be selfish and get the vaccine to protect your own life. Everyone in ways

makes an impact and difference on this world. You may have children you need to provide for, a husband or wife to be there for, and more. The vaccine not only slows the spread of the virus connected with the concept of herd immunity, but in a more safe way. You can protect yourself from becoming very ill, stuck in the hospital for long periods of time which can be costly, or even dying. The CDC (2022) voices, “COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are safe and are effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying.” Having an illness is never any fun, let alone one that can make you fight for your own life. Many regret their decision when they finally live with the harsh consequences that COVID-19 can do to you and your loved ones.

To conclude, the COVID-19 vaccine will guard you from securing the virus, it's a cautious way to aid in building immunity, it's a valuable tool to put an end to the pandemic, it doesn't affect your DNA, and finally if you do catch the virus it shields you from becoming extremely ill. After writing this essay I don't intend for my audience to get up and go get the vaccine immediately, however I hope they continue their research to maybe go and get the vaccine, promote it to others, and donate to organizations so they can keep doing research and providing the vaccine to the community. Now it's your turn to make sure 6 million doesn't turn into anything greater and save your life and many others!

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