Covid-19 Vaccine Comparisons and What You Should Know
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NW Indiana ER & Hospital Blog

As we've reached a year into the pandemic which captured people's lives, thankfully we are seeing a light to the endless tunnel. There are now three vaccines authorized and recommended to prevent Covid-19, developed by Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. While all three vaccines are doing the same job, to mitigate against Covid-19, it is important to understand what is known about each vaccine. Here is a basic breakdown of the three Covid-19 vaccinations available:

Pfizer
How it works: Pfizer uses a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine, which teaches the body how to make a protein that triggers an immune response, without using a live virus. After receiving the vaccine, your body makes antibodies that help fight the coronavirus if it enters your body in the future.

Who should be vaccinated: Recommended for people aged 16 years and older.

Dosage: 2 shots, 21 days apart

Efficacy: 95% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 illness

Moderna
How it works: The Moderna vaccine also uses mRNA technology, like Pfizer.

Who should be vaccinated: Recommended for people aged 18 years and older.

Dosage: 2 shots, 28 days apart

Efficacy: 94% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 illness

Johnson & Johnson
How it works: The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is called a viral vector shot. Viral vector vaccines are like messengers. They use a weakened version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver instructions to cells in your body. After getting the vaccine, the body's immune system recognizes that the protein doesn't belong there, and begins building an immune response to fight off what it thinks is an infection. This immune response makes antibodies that help fight the coronavirus moving forward.

Who should be vaccinated: Recommended for people aged 18 years and older.

Dosage: 1 shot

Efficacy: 66% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 illness, 85% at preventing severe disease, 100% against hospitalization and death

Side effects
It is completely normal to have side effects after receiving any of the vaccinations and is a sign that your body is building protection, which should only last a few days. Most who experience side-effects are mild to moderate. Side effects may include pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, or nausea. Call your healthcare provider if your side effects are worsening or do not go away after a few days. Some people do not experience any side effects.

Overall, each vaccine varies, but they all work towards the goal of ending the Covid-19 pandemic. Currently, the drug companies are studying the use of Covid-19 vaccines for the pediatric population, and are beginning live trials, as many parents want protection for their children. To learn more about continuing vaccine research, visit the CDC's website.

At NW Indiana ER & Hospital, our top priority is ensuring the safety of those we serve. We accept walk-in emergency Covid-19 evaluations, Sunday - Saturday, 7:00 am - 10:30 pm.