

January 2021

To Our Lobo Pack:

Now that the COVID-19 vaccine is here many of you may be excited and eager to receive it, while others may be reluctant. For those of you who are hesitant, you may be experiencing mistrust, fear, and concern with so many outlets providing information to you and your loved ones. These are natural emotions to feel when something new of this magnitude arises. It is difficult knowing who you can trust and what information is accurate. Therefore, we are here for you. Your SHAC Health Promotion team is dedicated in being transparent, providing accurate and factual information, and to address your questions.



ARE YOU HESITANT ABOUT THE VACCINE?

First, please know that although the vaccines have been developed quickly, researchers still have diligently observed and reported all safety information as they have tracked each participant (over 70,000 for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines!) carefully during the clinical trials. The overwhelming information to date is that the approved vaccines are safe, can help save many lives, and can eventually control the pandemic so that our society can return to a more normal level of functioning. Your SHAC Medical and Health Promotion teams have been closely tracking the development and delivery of the vaccines, feel confident in their safety and efficacy, and are here to help you understand more about them. Below are a few FAQ's we would like to address to help you understand more about the vaccines so that you are able to make an informed decision about becoming vaccinated when they become available to you:

Will I get symptoms from the vaccine?

Fever, fatigue, chills, and other smaller side effects are good signs! They only last 1-2 days and it is your body's natural response to build immunity to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID disease. Just as if you were to poke yourself with something, your body's response is to send helper cells to heal that cut with redness, inflammation, and heat. If you are worried about the side effects, health care providers suggest the use Tylenol as with other vaccinations.

Will I still need to wear a mask after I am vaccinated?

Yes, we will still need to wear masks after the vaccine is given. Given that this vaccine has just ended its efficacy trials, they are now on to longevity trials, this will take time. We need to stay vigilant and be patient.

How does this vaccine work or what is an mRNA vaccine?

Your DNA will not be changed. A part of the COVID mRNA, COVID protein, is put into the vaccine to assist your cells in creating the spike proteins to ward off the actual virus. Please visit this educational article to learn more: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/health/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Why aren't we talking about our body's natural immune system and how we build ours to combat the virus naturally?

While it is always great to have a natural, strong immune system this in itself cannot protect you. Our bodies cannot create immunity to the virus without either being exposed to the virus itself or being vaccinated to stimulate the immune system to become immune without risking illness to oneself or passing the infection to others who might be more vulnerable. As mentioned in the article above, your body needs the vaccine in order to be able to recognize the virus when and if you are exposed and avoid becoming ill or passing the infection on to others.

Your SHAC team will be receiving their vaccines as our time comes. We will continue to be transparent with our UNM community and keep you posted with the most up to date information on this vaccine. Until then, we urge our UNM community to continue to respect each other and seek out answers from credible sources. This vaccine is what we have been waiting for and will help to save lives!

Visit this link to some of the webinars that your SHAC HP team has watched: <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/institute-programs/covid-19-response/international-covid19/global-conversations/> Here, you can find videos, power points, and the biographies of the panelists.

We hope this can help answer many of your questions and put you all at some sort of ease. Please know that we are here to help answer your questions and to ensure our Lobos are safe and healthy. #ProtectThePack

-Your SHAC Health Promotion Team