



Myth vs. Fact: COVID-19 Vaccines

With the abundance of information surrounding COVID-19, it can be challenging to decipher what information is accurate, reliable and trustworthy. There are many misconceptions and inaccuracies surrounding not only the virus but also the vaccines available to guard us against contracting the virus. Read on to learn the myths vs. facts regarding the approved vaccines.

Myth: The COVID-19 vaccines were created too quickly without going through the typical protocols and safety measures that other types of vaccines do.

Fact: The approved COVID-19 vaccines went through rigorous testing, including clinical trials with tens of thousands of participants. Typically, it takes years and billions of dollars to have a vaccine go from concept to approval. However, pharmaceutical companies and the federal government collaborated with the [Operation Warp Speed](#) initiative. This accelerated the process, allowing for expedited funding that often slows the timeline; thorough testing for safety and effectiveness; and the development and rapid distribution of supplies – quicker than any other vaccine in the past.

Myth: After getting a vaccine, you will test positive on a COVID-19 test.

Fact: None of the authorized vaccines in the U.S. will cause you to have a positive COVID-19 test result.

Myth: You don't need to get a vaccine if you've already been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Fact: Since individuals can get infected more than once with COVID-19, it is advised that you still get a vaccine. In addition, it is not yet completely understood how long you are protected from the virus after you have recovered from it, so the vaccine provides another layer of protection.

Myth: The technology behind the COVID-19 vaccines is brand new.

Fact: Researchers have worked with and studied mRNA technology (e.g., Moderna and Pfizer vaccines) as well as vector-based vaccines (e.g., Johnson & Johnson) for years.

Myth: A COVID-19 vaccine will alter your DNA.

Fact: None of the approved COVID-19 vaccines will change or interact with your DNA in any way.

Myth: It is not safe for you to get a COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or may become pregnant.

Fact: People who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant may receive the vaccine. Current studies show no evidence of the antibodies formed from the vaccine causing any complications with pregnancy or fertility.

"Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines," cdc.gov, accessed March 9, 2021.

"COVID-19 Vaccines: Myth Versus Fact," hopkinsmedicine.org, accessed March 9, 2021.

"How were researchers able to develop COVID-19 vaccines so quickly," news.uchicago.edu, accessed March 9, 2021.



The Last Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe You'll Ever Need

Active 5 minutes
Total 20 minutes
Makes 20 cookies

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract or more if preferred

(Did you know using vanilla sweetens baking recipes and is a great substitute for sugar? Experiment with the amount until you reach a sweetness you love!)

- 1 1/2 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup peanut butter or nut butter of choice

(If using nut butter that is looser than regular peanut butter, consider reducing the amount of banana you add to the recipe to keep the batter thick.)

- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- Optional add-ins: raisins, nuts of choice

Instructions

- Preheat your oven to 350 F. Grease or line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Mash the bananas and fold them into the oats, adding your peanut butter or nut butter of choice. Mix in the chocolate chips.
- Use a cookie scooper or small spoon to drop the dough on your baking sheet. (They don't expand much, so you can place them close together!)
- Bake the cookies for 10 minutes or until lightly brown.
- Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for five minutes before moving them to a cooling rack.
- Enjoy right away, store them in an airtight container at room temperature for five days, or pop them in the freezer for up to six months!

Recipe adapted from mydarlingvegan.com



5 Medical Appointments You Should Keep

If you're nervous about stepping into a clinic or emergency room right now – for routine or emergency medical care – experts recommend you don't delay your visits. That's because there's emerging evidence that the health threats from putting off some medical tests and exams, including those for cancer and heart disease, outweigh the risk of getting exposed to COVID-19 at a doctor's visit, even if the virus is widespread in your community. Below are five crucial in-person medical appointments you shouldn't postpone any longer.

✓ Cancer Screenings

If you screen routinely for breast cancer, colon cancer, skin cancer and other malignancies or you have a personal or family history of any cancer, don't postpone your cancer screenings. Timing can make the difference when it comes to detection and successful treatment.

✓ Prompt Checkups for New Red-Flag Symptoms

For any new symptoms that are persistent or affecting your daily life get them checked out by your health care provider. It is important to contact your health care provider for even subtler symptoms, such as occasional chest discomfort or shortness of breath, that come and go or that stop if you sit down and rest. For any sudden emergency symptoms like crushing chest pain and trouble breathing, call 911 and get treatment in the ER.

✓ Chronic Disease Follow-ups

If you're already taking medicine for a health condition, see your health care provider who prescribed the medication. It may be unsafe for you to continue postponing this appointment, especially if you have an illness that can have serious complications if it's left unmanaged, such as heart failure, chronic lung disease, kidney disease or diabetes.

✓ Mental Health Management

Psychiatric appointments (including those that require in-person interactions), regular visits (e.g., for long-acting psychiatric drug injections or drug screening tests and pickups for patients in medication-assisted treatment programs), and blood tests for medicine titrations should continue uninterrupted. It's important to note that if you (or someone you know) is experiencing suicidal thoughts, you may need to visit a health care professional right away.

✓ Sexual Health Maintenance

If you're experiencing new genital or urinary symptoms, think you've been exposed to a sexually transmitted infection, or are taking medication to treat or prevent HIV, regular visits for the required lab tests should not be delayed. Also, if you're using long-acting birth control devices, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs) and other implants, check with your health care provider to see if you're close to the expiration date and don't delay an appointment if the device needs to be removed or updated.

"5 Medical Appointments You Should Stop Putting Off," npr.org, Kristen Kendrick, March 2, 2021.

