How do vaccines work

Vaccines are an important part of routine healthcare and key to **preventing diseases** that spread from one person to another.

When bacteria or viruses enter our bodies, they attack and multiply. This invasion is called **an infection**. The immune system fights back to protect the body's cells and counterattack the invasion.

Types of COVID-19 Vaccines

1. **mRNA vaccines**
2. **Protein subunit vaccines:** fragments of the COVID-19 virus
3. **Vector vaccines**

- Each COVID-19 vaccine works in a different way.
- All expose the body to material that prompts an immune response.
- The immune system then builds antibodies that can recognize and fight the virus.
- If the real virus enters the body, the immune system is trained and remembers how to respond to prevent COVID-19.

ALL vaccines help keep people SAFE from infections by:

- Imitating an infection
- Helping the body's immune system
- Teaching the body to "remember" how to fight the bacteria or virus in the future

Building Protection to Fight Against COVID-19

After each dose of vaccine, your body might show some signs of the hard work it's doing to build this protection, such as a fever that lasts a short time or a headache. Producing immunity can take a couple of weeks.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit **vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine** or call 877-ASK-VDH3.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH