

How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work

Understanding the virus that causes COVID-19.

Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called **spike proteins**. These **spike proteins** are ideal targets for vaccines.

What is mRNA?

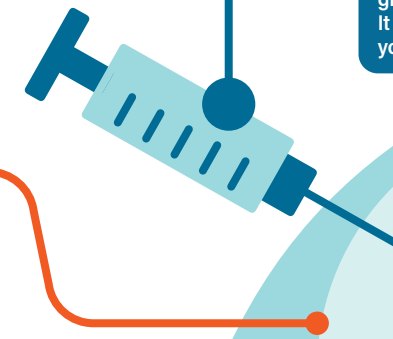
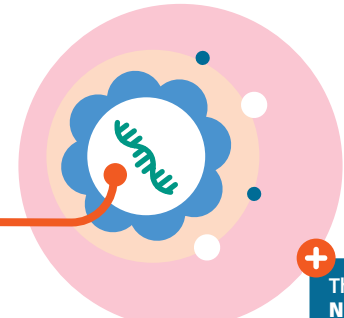
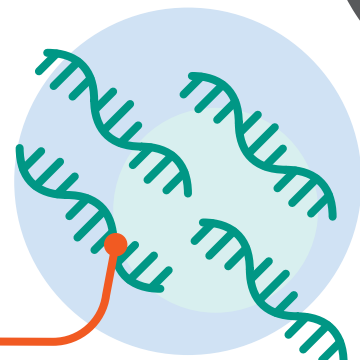
Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is genetic material that tells your body how to make proteins.

What is in the vaccine?

The vaccine is made of mRNA wrapped in a coating that makes delivery easy and keeps the body from damaging it.

How does the vaccine work?

The mRNA in the vaccine teaches your cells how to make copies of the **spike protein**. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off.



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The vaccine **DOES NOT** contain **ANY** virus, so it cannot give you COVID-19. It cannot change your DNA in any way.

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When your body responds to the vaccine, it can sometimes cause a mild fever, headache, or chills. This is completely normal and a sign that the vaccine is working.

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After the mRNA delivers the instructions, your cells break it down and get rid of it.

GETTING VACCINATED?

For information about COVID-19 vaccine, visit: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)

