A GUIDE TO COVID-19

mRNA VACCINES

HOW IT WORKS
Through a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, you receive pieces of mRNA*, harmless genetic material used to create proteins.

* mRNA, which is separate from DNA, is a component found in all cells.

CREATE Your body uses the mRNA to manufacture a version of the spike protein\(^1\) found on the COVID-19 virus.

LEARN The newly created spike protein triggers an immune response — teaching your body to recognize and respond to the virus in a variety of ways.

REACT If you are exposed to the virus in the future, your immune system will quickly recognize the spike protein and begin destroying the virus (i.e., you may never feel sick).

\(^1\) Spike protein: A component on the outer shell of the COVID-19 virus. By itself, the spike protein is completely harmless.

The Benefit of Getting Vaccinated: The COVID-19 virus replicates quickly. Without the vaccine, your body has to identify the virus, learn how to fight it, and carry out an immune response. In the meantime, the virus can replicate to a level beyond what your immune system can handle at once (i.e., you feel sick). With the vaccine, your body can more quickly identify the virus and skip straight to mounting its immune response.