

## Episode 30 – COVID-19 Vaccines and Faith Communities

Amidst the public discourse about COVID-19 vaccines are questions and concerns pertaining to moral implications and religious objections. Fr. Tom Nairn, PhD, a trained ethicist and author of several books on bioethics, joins Dr. Reginald Eadie, president and CEO at Trinity Health of New England, in countering some of the myths and clarifying some of the misinformation that has arisen.

<https://catholic-health-usa-podcast.simplecast.com/episodes/covid-19-vaccines-and-faith-communities>

### Busting COVID-19 Vaccine Myths with Science

Holy Cross Health follows direction and guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is confident in the safety of the vaccine with FDA approval. Using this information, we want to help you bust some of the more common COVID-19 vaccine myths below with science-based facts. **It's not a myth but a fact that vaccination is going to be the most effective way to end the pandemic.**

**Myth: People who are pro-life should be concerned about the way the vaccine was developed.**

**Fact:** The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have clearly stated that both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are morally acceptable. In a Dec. 14, 2020 memo they wrote: "Neither Pfizer nor Moderna used morally compromised cell lines in the design, development, or production of the vaccine."

**Myth: The vaccine causes sterilization in women.**

**Fact:** No significant safety concerns, including sterilization, have been observed during the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine trials. Additionally, a vaccine cannot be approved without following set safety protocols. Approval also cannot happen until last at least two months after the final shot is given during the clinical trial to monitor for safety concerns. Trial participants will be monitored for long term side effects for at least two years. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and those with a history of allergic reactions to vaccines should first speak with their doctor.

**Myth: The government is implanting a tracking chip via the vaccine.**

**Fact:** The COVID-19 vaccine itself will not contain any sort of microchip or tracking device implemented by the government. The vaccine syringes will likely contain something called an RFID microchip from medical solutions company Apiject Systems America. This will allow public health agencies to collect information about when and where the vaccine was administered, but nothing except the vaccine is injected into your body.

**Myth: The vaccine will give you COVID-19 or can shed the virus.**

**Fact:** You cannot get COVID-19 from mRNA vaccines or shed the virus after receiving one because they do not contain the live virus.

**Myth: Safety protocols were bypassed to develop the vaccine quickly.**

**Fact:** Since the start of the pandemic, the federal government, under Operation Warp Speed (OWS), has been working to make a COVID-19 vaccine available ASAP. OWS provides federal resources and funding to speed development but maintains strict standards for safety and effectiveness. The timeframe to develop the vaccine was shortened significantly by beginning mass production before receiving Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA. The clinical studies were not bypassed or shortened.

**Myth: mRNA technology is too new and not proven.**

**Fact:** According to the National Institutes of Health, research on mRNA technology began in the early 1990s with testing in animals and has been studied for use in vaccines, including on humans, over the last ten years.

**Myth: It's better to take your chances and just get COVID-19.**

**Fact:** While it's true that **most** recover, COVID-19 can cause severe health risks and some people still have symptoms for months after they are infected. Also, some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last long. The COVID-19 vaccine is a safer way to build immunity with fewer health risks.