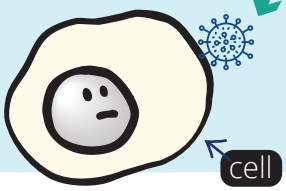
PANDEMIC | OCOH Our Community. Our Health.

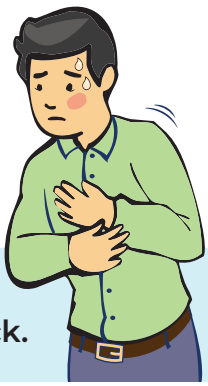
How COVID-19 vaccines work in your body to keep you safe

This is a coronavirus, like the one that causes COVID-19.

Its surface is covered in small bumps, called **spike proteins** that help it get into your cells.



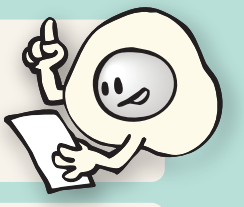
Once inside your cells, the virus starts making lots of copies of itself.



When there are too many of these copies, **your cells can't work normally and you get sick.**

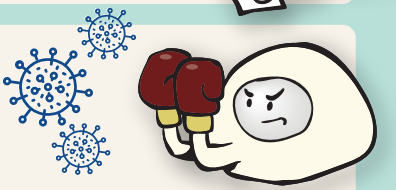
That's where the vaccine comes in!

The vaccine gives your immune system instructions for how to fight off the virus. (Your immune system is your body's natural defense system against getting sick.)



So, if you're exposed to the real virus later, **your immune system recognizes it and defends itself.**

This helps keep you from getting so sick that you have to go to the hospital, or so sick that you die.



The vaccine never enters the core of your cells where your DNA is – **that's why the vaccine can't change your DNA in any way.**

There's no real virus in the vaccine, so it can't give you COVID-19.

What is the updated vaccine?

The updated vaccine (also called the bivalent vaccine) has been updated to help protect against new strains of COVID-19. **The COVID-19 virus has changed over time.** Most people are getting sick from these newer types of the virus.

Visit our website to find out if you can get a COVID-19 vaccine at no cost through CDC's Bridge Access Program.

bit.ly/3QMEI8B

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