

Body Piercing & Current Information Regarding Covid-19 Vaccinations.

December 24th, 2020 (Updated March 11th & May 13, 2021)

APP Medical Committee & APP Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee

Established in 1994, the Association of Professional Piercers (APP) is an international health and safety organization. It is a nonprofit voluntary alliance dedicated to the dissemination of information about body piercing. Governed by a voluntary elected Board of Directors, the APP is a united group of piercing professionals that freely shares information to fellow members, piercers, healthcare professionals, legislators, health inspectors, and the general public so that the best and most up-to-date information about body piercing is available.

During this pandemic, information continues to evolve very quickly. The authors of this document will make every effort to make regular updates as new and better information is obtained. If citing these protocols, please link back to this document. Please remember that the information may change as updates occur regularly. If you have suggestions for improvements to this document please email the secretary of the APP at secretary@safepiercing.org

How Vaccines Work

Vaccines help develop immunity by imitating an infection. This type of imitation infection almost never causes illness, but it does cause the immune system to produce T-lymphocytes. Once the imitation infection goes away, the body is left with a supply of “memory” T-lymphocytes, as well as B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight that disease in the future. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to produce T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes after vaccination. It is possible for a person to become infected with a disease just before or just after vaccination. They can develop symptoms and get a disease because the

A Closer Look at How COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines Work

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines provide instructions for our cells to make a harmless piece of what is called the “spike protein.” The spike protein is found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are given in the upper arm muscle. Once the instructions (mRNA) are inside the immune cells, the cells use them to make the protein piece. After the protein piece is made, the cell breaks down the instructions and gets rid of them.

Next, the cell displays the protein piece on its surface. Our immune systems recognize that the protein doesn't belong

vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.¹

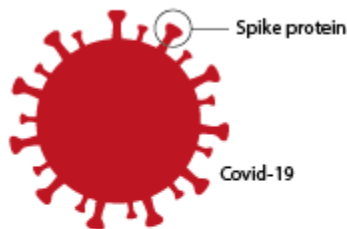
New Approach to Vaccines

mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine used to protect against infectious diseases. To trigger an immune response, many vaccines put a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies, but not mRNA vaccines. Instead, they teach our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

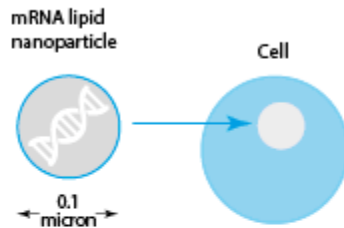
there and begin building an immune response and making antibodies, similar to what happens in natural infection against COVID-19.

At the end of the process, our bodies have learned how to protect against future infection. The benefit of mRNA vaccines, like all vaccines, is that those who are vaccinated gain this protection without ever having to risk the serious consequences of getting sick with COVID-19.²

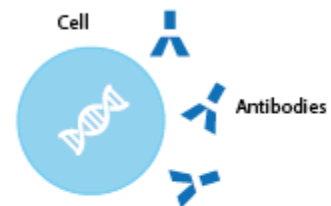
How mRNA vaccines work



Messenger RNA (mRNA) is a synthetic genetic sequence. It contains instructions that cells can use to make the Covid-19 spike protein without causing the disease.



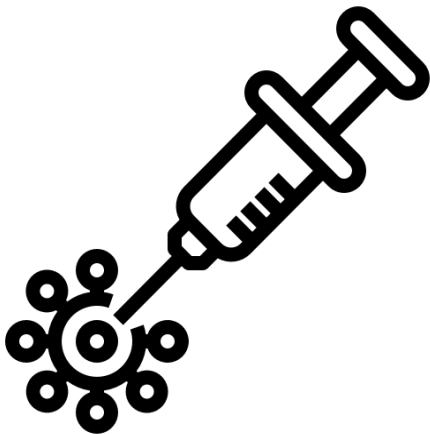
The mRNA is packaged in fatty lipid nanoparticles. These protect the fragile genetic instructions while they are manufactured, transported and finally administered.



Once inside the cell, the mRNA instructs the cell to produce the viral protein. This appears on the surface of the cells and stimulates an immune system response.

How Viral Vector Vaccines work?

Many vaccines use a weakened or inactivated form of the target pathogen to trigger an immune response. Viral vector vaccines use a different virus as a vector instead, which delivers important instructions (in the form of a gene) to our cells. For COVID-19 vaccines, a modified virus delivers a gene that instructs our cells to make a SARS-CoV-2 antigen called the spike protein. This antigen triggers production of antibodies and a resulting immune response. The virus used in a viral vector vaccine poses no threat of causing illness in humans because it has been modified or, in some cases, because the type of virus used as the vector cannot cause disease in humans.



In the development of viral vector vaccines, several different viruses have been used as vectors, including influenza, vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV), measles virus, and adenovirus, which causes the common cold. Adenovirus is one of the viral vectors used in some late-stage COVID-19 vaccine trials.

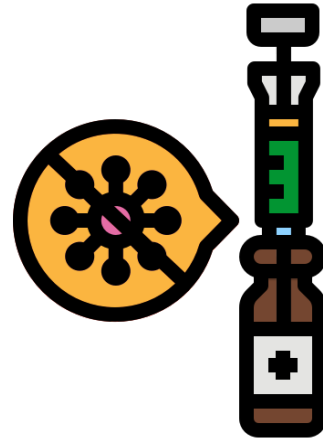
In viral vector vaccines, a gene unique to the virus being targeted is added to the viral vector. For COVID-19 vaccines, this gene codes for the spike protein, which is only found on the surface of SARS-CoV-2. The viral vector is used to shuttle this gene into a human cell. Once inside a cell, the viral vector uses this gene and the cell's machinery to produce the spike protein and display it on the cell's surface.

Once displayed on the cell's surface, the protein (or antigen) causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies and activating T-cells to fight off what it thinks is an infection. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means the immune system is primed to protect against future infection.⁴

Although vaccinations are accelerating, CDC estimates that just 9.2% of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine

Q Do I still need to wear a mask and/or avoid close contact if I've been vaccinated?

On May 13, 2021, the CDC stated that it is safe for fully vaccinated individuals (two weeks after second dose of Moderna/Pfizer or one dose of Johnson & Johnson) to resume normal activities without a mask or social distancing, **as long as it doesn't violate local laws or workplace guidance**. Unless prohibited by law, consider asking customers to provide proof of vaccination. **Be sure to continue to follow local guidelines for mask wearing.**



Q What if someone hasn't been vaccinated?

Those who have not received the vaccine should still wear a mask indoors and exercise social distance as well as practicing social distancing.

Q How does this affect Piercing Studios?

Many states and/or localities still have mask mandates or workplace guidelines that require wearing masks in close contact businesses. You should continue to follow those guidelines until they change. Otherwise, it will depend on the workflow and amount of customers in your studio.

First, we encourage all eligible staff, both piercers and support staff, to be fully vaccinated if they are eligible to receive the vaccine. This not only helps protect the individual staff member, but other staff members and customers.

If local ordinance allows, it may be safe for fully vaccinated staff to be in the studio without a mask, depending on local vaccination rates and rates of COVID cases. However, it may be easier to enforce mask wearing for unvaccinated customers if staff continue to wear masks.

The next consideration is the vaccine status of customers.

Customers with proof of full vaccination may be safe to enter studios unmasked. Studios will need to determine the level of risk they are comfortable with based on local numbers of COVID cases and vaccination rates.



Unvaccinated customers and/or those with unknown status should continue to wear masks inside studios as well as social distancing. If it is impractical or illegal in your area to have customers provide proof of full vaccination or vaccination status is unknown, it is best to enforce masking in the studio.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading at Piercing Studios increases as follows:

Lowest risk: Virtual-only troubleshooting and online retail sales
Low risk: Piercing services outside the mask area, with both parties fully vaccinated and wearing facemask.
Low risk: In-person retail sales only, maintaining social distance and both parties wear facemasks.
Low risk: Piercing services under the mask area with only the practitioner wearing a facemask, both parties vaccinated.
Higher risk: Piercing services outside the mask area, with both parties unvaccinated and wearing facemasks.
Highest risk: Piercing services under the mask area with only the practitioner wearing a facemask, with both parties unvaccinated.

References

¹[Understanding how vaccines work](#)

²[Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

³[Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

⁴[Understanding and Explaining Viral Vector](#)