

Dear

Now that the COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for use in anyone ages 12 and older, I'd like to take the opportunity to share my thoughts about the vaccine with you. I hope this information will help you make the decision to vaccinate yourself or your eligible children. The vaccine is the most effective way to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.

If you or your kids have already been vaccinated, congratulations! The more people who get vaccinated the faster we all can get back to normal.

If you are still trying to decide if you or your kids should get the vaccine, please think about this information.

These vaccines are exceedingly safe. Since late March, when everyone 16 and older became eligible to be vaccinated:

- There have been 27,017 total COVID-19 cases identified in Utah. 97%, or 26,205 of them, have been unvaccinated people.
- There have been 1,532 people hospitalized. 95%, or 1,459 of them, were unvaccinated.
- And there have been 110 people who have died. 98%, or 108 of them, were unvaccinated.

Despite what you may have heard, kids do get COVID-19. In fact, nearly 77,000 kids in Utah have been diagnosed with COVID-19 during the pandemic. Nearly 700 kids have been sick enough to need treatment in the hospital. And 74 of them have developed a rare, but serious, condition known as MIS-C that is related to COVID-19.

I know you've probably heard stories or rumors that may make you nervous about vaccinating yourself or your children. Some of these rumors are deliberate attempts to misinform you. Others are just flat-out false.

Here are the facts:

- The vaccines are safe and effective. Some people will develop side effects, but these are usually short-lasting and minor (like pain, redness, or swelling where they got the shot, or other flu-like symptoms). You can find more information about side effects in the information that came with this letter.
- Even though the vaccines were developed quickly, the vaccine manufacturers followed the same process that is used to approve other vaccines. The vaccines were developed quickly by cutting red tape, not by cutting corners.
- The COVID-19 vaccines won't give you or your child COVID-19. This common concern is simply not true. The vaccines do not contain any "live virus" and cannot give you COVID-19.
- The vaccines have not been linked to infertility or miscarriages. There is absolutely no data to suggest this rumor is true.

- Even if you or your child has had COVID-19 in the past they should still get vaccinated. Research shows that natural immunity from having COVID-19 may not last as long as immunity from the vaccines.

Getting vaccinated not only protects you, but it also protects everyone around you - grandparents, other family members, neighbors, friends, teachers, and others who can't be vaccinated for one reason or another.

If you have further questions please call my office, or visit coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine. You can find flyers, videos, handouts, posters, fact sheets, graphics, and FAQs in more than 30 languages.

COVID-19 vaccines are free and widely available at hundreds of vaccine locations across the state, including for walk-in and after hours appointments. You can find more information on scheduling a vaccine appointment at <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine-distribution>.

Best regards,