

### Questions about the Covid-19 vaccination

#### 1. Why should you be vaccinated against coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a serious disease. Infected people often become seriously ill or die. Coronavirus is particularly dangerous for the elderly or those with other health conditions. Vulnerable people are at high risk and are in so-called risk categories.

In the majority of cases, the vaccination protects people from falling ill with coronavirus. The more people who get vaccinated, the quicker and more effectively the disease can be combated. Firstly, lots of people must be vaccinated. Only then can everyday life return to normal one step at a time.

#### 2. What are the advantages of the coronavirus vaccine?

People who have been fully vaccinated have fewer restrictions in everyday life.

- For example, there are no longer any restrictions on meeting other people. That means that people with the full vaccination are allowed to meet lots of other vaccinated people. Those who are vaccinated are also not counted in gatherings with unvaccinated persons.
- There are no longer any restrictions for individual sports which do not involve body contact.
- There are no longer any restrictions on going out in the evening – those who are fully vaccinated can continue to go out during a curfew.
- Fully vaccinated people no longer need to quarantine after a trip. The exception is when you return from a country with a variant of coronavirus.
- There is no compulsory testing for those who are fully vaccinated. This applies wherever a negative test would normally have to be shown. For example, when “Click & Meet” shopping, at the hairdresser's, or when getting a pedicure. A vaccination certificate must be presented in these situations instead.

#### 3. What does fully vaccinated mean?

A vaccination is given as an injection into the arm. Sometimes you need two injections several weeks apart. The amount in a single injection is called the vaccination dose.

To be fully vaccinated, 14 days must have passed since the last required vaccination dose. The vaccine must be approved in the EU, as follows: Moderna, BioNTech, AstraZeneca/Vaxzevria, Johnson & Johnson. In addition, you must not have any coronavirus symptoms or currently be unwell with coronavirus. The number of required doses depends on the vaccine. For the vaccines made by Moderna, BioNtech, and AstraZeneca/Vaxzevria, two vaccinations are always necessary. Only one vaccination is required for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

If a person has already been infected with coronavirus, they will have built up a level of protection. This protection is called immunity. If you then get the vaccination within 6 months of a coronavirus infection, a single vaccination dose is enough.

#### **4. Do you have to pay for the coronavirus vaccine?**

No. The vaccination in Germany is free.

It does not matter where you are insured.

#### **5. Is vaccination compulsory?**

No. There is no obligation in Germany to be vaccinated.

However, you may only be allowed into certain buildings with proof of vaccination. At the very least, you will be able to enter some places more easily with a vaccination certificate.

#### **6. How do the vaccines work?**

Vaccines make the human body build defences against a virus. This is how all vaccines approved in Germany work to protect against the coronavirus. The vaccines contain a particular blueprint for part of the virus called the spike protein. Spike proteins are the small bumps that stick out from the surface of the virus. These spikes are reproduced by human cells after vaccination. The immune defence notices this and forms the desired defence cells. These fight the virus when a real infection occurs.

#### **7. How safe are the vaccines?**

The vaccines have been carefully tested and reviewed. There are laws and international rules for this. Following trials, vaccines are approved. The vaccines were developed very quickly. Despite this, the same standards apply as for other vaccines, even if approval for other vaccines has taken longer. After approval, the vaccines continue to be checked to find very rare side effects. The approved vaccines differ very little in their effects. All approved vaccines are safe. All of them work reliably against coronavirus.

#### **8. Is it possible to become ill with coronavirus when you are vaccinated?**

Yes, that can happen. In the majority of cases, vaccinated people only suffer mild coronavirus symptoms. Sometimes they don't even notice that they have coronavirus. The vaccination still works. It can prevent serious illnesses and deaths.

#### **9. What are the side effects of the vaccination?**

Reactions can occur after any vaccine. It is possible to react to the coronavirus vaccination. Such reactions show that the body is building up protection to the virus.

Vaccination reactions usually occur shortly after vaccination and last a few days. The side effects vary. For example, some suffer pain at the injection site, fatigue or a headache. Some feel unwell and have a slight fever, similar to a cold.

This is a sign that the body is preparing to defend itself against the virus. Serious side effects are very rare.

### **10. Can I go to vaccinations during working hours?**

Currently, it is not possible to book a specific vaccination date of your choice. If you are given an appointment during working hours, you can take time off. Whether this time is paid by your employer is stipulated in your employment contract. You must inform your employer as soon as possible if you are not able to attend work due to a vaccination appointment. When you are able to freely book appointments in the future, you should arrange your vaccination outside of working hours.

### **11. Do you have to tell your employer if you have had a coronavirus vaccine?**

In general, there is no obligation.

There are some professions, however, where you can only work if you have been vaccinated, otherwise the rules of the Coronavirus Occupational Health and Safety Ordinance cannot be observed. In these cases, the employer has to know.

### **12. Do the vaccines contain animal material?**

No. Currently, the approved vaccines do not contain any material derived from animals.

### **13. Which vaccines are recognised in Germany?**

The following vaccines are currently approved in the EU and Germany: BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca/Vaxzevria and Johnson & Johnson. Only these vaccines are valid in Germany. No other vaccines are approved. Other vaccines are still being tested and reviewed.

### **14. Is it necessary to take a booster vaccine?**

At the moment, experts believe that you will have to have a booster vaccination to increase your protection. However, it remains unclear whether this must be done after 6, 9 or 12 months.

**If we want to resume a normal life, we should all get vaccinated. Then we will be able to enjoy life once more with good health, friends, family and travel.**