Myth #1: The vaccines were developed too fast, and they don't know if they are safe.

The Facts: These vaccines could be made quickly and still be safe for several reasons.

- Scientists had a head start because they had already studied other coronaviruses like SARS and MERS. They had also studied both mRNA and viral vector vaccines. These are the types of COVID-19 vaccines that are used in the United States.
- The government provided a lot of money and resources for vaccine development. This made it easier for scientists to work together.
- Researchers used existing networks to conduct COVID-19 vaccine trials. The trials could start quickly because people were eager to take part.
- The review and authorization of COVID-19 vaccines was prioritized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- mRNA vaccines (the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) are faster to make than traditional vaccines.
- Some of the stages to develop and produce the vaccines the were done at the same time instead of one after another. For example, manufacturing began while clinical trials were still being done. What is important is that every step that must be followed to make a new vaccine and make sure it is safe was followed. No steps were skipped.

Myth #2: We don't know enough about the long-term effects.

The Facts: Scientific understanding of how vaccines work tell us that it is very unlikely that the COVID-19 vaccines will cause any long-term side effects.

Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are rare after any vaccine. Previous vaccine monitoring has shown that side effects typically happen within six weeks of getting any vaccine. The FDA required each COVID-19 vaccine to be studied for at least eight weeks after the final dose.

In comparison, COVID-19 infection can cause many different long-term conditions, including post-COVID (or long-COVID). Post-COVID can even happen in people who had mild symptoms or in those who did not have any symptoms at all.

The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be under the most intensive vaccine safety monitoring in U.S. history. This includes using both new and existing systems to check that the vaccine is safe.

Use of these safety monitoring systems has helped identify some rare side-effects. These happened within a few days or weeks of vaccination. Blood clots and unusual bleeding (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome or TTS) and Guillain Barré syndrome (GBS, a disease of the nervous system) have been reported in people who received the J&J vaccine. Inflammation of the heart and the heart lining (myocarditis and pericarditis) have been reported in people who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. Although these conditions can be very serious, they are extremely rare. COVID-19 infection is much more likely to cause serious health conditions – including abnormal clotting, GBS, myocarditis and pericarditis.

To date, over 350 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been given in the US. Although serious effects can happen, they are very rare. The risk of these potential harms varies by age and sex, but overall, it is estimated that out of every million people who receive a 2nd dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, 3.5 will get myocarditis. For the J&J vaccine out of every million people who get a vaccine, 7.8 people will get GBS, and 3 people will get TTS. The benefits of getting the COVID-19 vaccine continue to outweigh the risks of COVID-19 infection.

You can learn more by visiting the CDC webpage Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines.