➔ Frequently Asked Questions about the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine – New 3/10

• Does the Johnson & Johnson vaccine provide as much protection as Pfizer and Moderna vaccines?

All the vaccines provide high levels of protection against severe disease. This is the most important thing to prevent by getting vaccinated.

• What was the vaccine trial and testing process like for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

It was a double blind, placebo controlled study, where half the people got vaccine and half got saline. The vaccine trial participants were all informed that they would be randomized before they agreed to take part in the trial. Persons who developed symptoms were tested for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).

• What is different about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine that it only requires one dose?

It is a different kind of technology. It uses a modified cold virus to deliver DNA that codes for the spike protein to teach the body to create the spike protein; the body then mounts an immune response to it. This way the next time the body sees a coronavirus it can fight the virus. Studies showed that people mounted a good immune response with just one dose, and the clinical trial showed that one dose could prevent COVID-19.

• If I get the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine now, will I need to get a second dose at some point in the future?

A single dose vaccine offers high levels of protection and for long periods of time based on the experience of similar vaccines such as Ebola, so at present, a second dose is not recommended. However, further studies could find that a second dose could provide even higher level of protection and also for longer. We will have to wait to find out from the results of that trial which are ongoing.

• How well does the Johnson & Johnson vaccine perform against the variants?

The J and J vaccine performs very well against the known variants. We don’t have as much information about the other two vaccines because at the time of their testing, none of the variants were around. It is possible they are very effective against the variant, too, but we just don’t have data. A conversation was reported saying that since one dose of Pfizer or Moderna seems to have the same effectiveness as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, they weren’t going to get the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna. One dose of Pfizer and Moderna has some effectiveness, but the protocols studied and the data collected looked primarily at two doses, so they are approved as two-dose series. Until we know better, there is no recommendation for a 1 dose Moderna or Pfizer. The J and J vaccine has more data available based on efficacy for a 1-dose model.

• What are the side effects from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

Local side effects such as sore arm, redness, swelling, and also body-wide effects such as fever, headache and body pain. No severe allergic reactions were seen among more than 20,000 persons who received the vaccine in the clinical trial.