

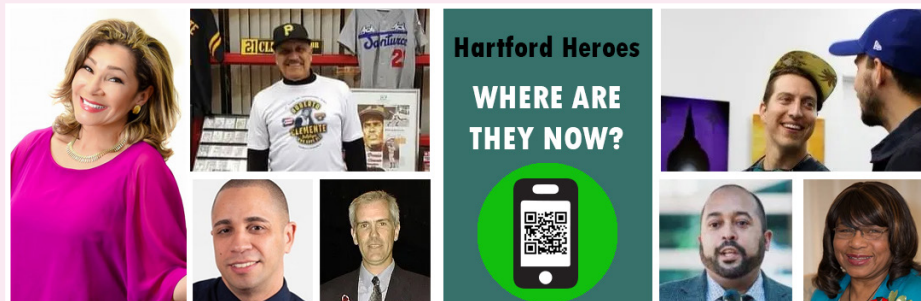
## Keeping Neighbors Safe

While many people are eager to be vaccinated, to protect themselves and vulnerable loved ones from COVID-19, others continue to have concerns. Recent work by SINA helps families in our neighborhood express those worries. A vaccine survey was conducted with Trinity College, and focus groups were conducted with Luis Rivera of Connecticut Children's. SINA also distributed flyers and hosted a Community Connection Summit with 25 organizations to coordinate vaccine outreach efforts.

Participants heard from Liany Arroyo, director of the City of Hartford's health department, and Greg Jones of Hartford Healthcare. Barriers were identified, from concerns about the vaccine itself to language issues on vaccination registration websites. Everyone agreed to work together to recruit volunteers who can help people in our neighborhood register and get vaccinated. If you want to volunteer, contact Logan Singerman at [lsingerman@sinainc.org](mailto:lsingerman@sinainc.org), or by calling (860) 493-1618.



Another way of helping our community is by protecting children so they can return to school safely. SINA's REACH program conducted a face mask drive with Olga Gonzalez, the nurse at Maria Sanchez School. Support from Trinity College students, Connecticut Children's staff and St. James Church allowed us to donate nearly 600 masks, two for each student who attends school in person!



## Our Role Models

Our new SINA Shares eblast has kept people informed during the pandemic, and includes a section called Hartford Heroes. We wondered what former Neighborhood Service Award winners are doing now, so we conducted interviews with some of these community leaders.

Visit [www.hartfordheroes.com](http://www.hartfordheroes.com) to learn more about what Julio Concepcion, Nat Gale, Ana Alfaro, Noel Casiano, Rob O'Connor, Hyacinth Yennie and Luis Rivera are up to now, and what motivates them to serve.



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS  
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

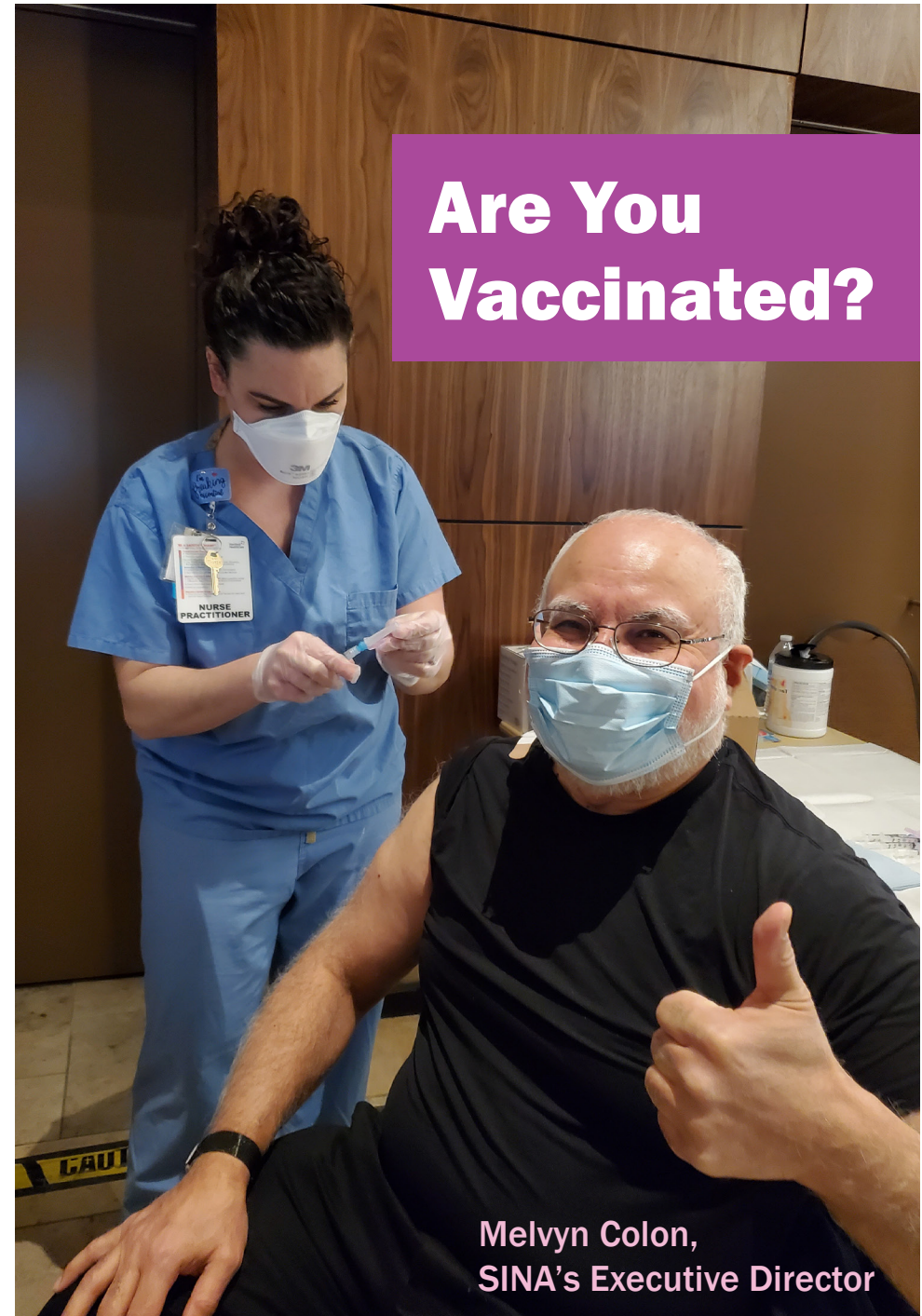
207 Washington Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

## About SINA

Since its founding in 1977 SINA has worked with community organizations on issues such as affordable rental housing, education, public safety, homeownership and commercial development. With dozens of apartment units rehabilitated, homeownership programs, and the opening of The Learning Corridor, its visible impact in the Frog Hollow, Barry Square and South Green neighborhoods has been significant and its community involvement has been a constant presence. Our offices, located at 207 Washington Street, are closed for the duration of the health crisis. For more information call (860) 493-1618 or visit [www.sinainc.org](http://www.sinainc.org). You can follow SINA on Twitter ([@sinainc](https://twitter.com/sinainc)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/sinainc](https://www.facebook.com/sinainc)). To receive SINA Shares, our weekly news bulletin, by email, contact Logan at [lsingerman@sinainc.org](mailto:lsingerman@sinainc.org).



## Are You Vaccinated?



Melvyn Colon,  
SINA's Executive Director

SINA is a partnership between Connecticut Children's, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with community stakeholders to restore economic vitality and improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhoods of South Central Hartford.





# Are You Vaccinated?

People have many reasons they hesitate about getting vaccinated for COVID-19, but those doubts are often based on misinformation, especially from social media. Here are some common questions people have, and the actual facts, to help reassure you.

**Will the vaccine give me COVID?** No, it won't. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) none of the approved vaccines contain the live virus. As John Hopkins Medicine explains, the vaccines do not contain the SARS-Co-2 virus, so you cannot get COVID-19 from them. They simply teach your immune system to recognize and fight any virus that has the specific COVID-19 spike proteins.

**Was the vaccine developed too quickly to be safe?** Johns Hopkins Medicine explains that the world's resources and most of its pharmaceutical companies focused on COVID, and social media recruited volunteers faster than usual, all of which helped. The mRNA technology used has been in development for almost two decades, which made creating the vaccine easier and faster. The New York Times explains that Johnson & Johnson's COVID vaccine came out of decades of research on Ebola, H.I.V. and Zika, testing vaccines that work in the same ways. Development of vaccines was also helped by China quickly identifying and sharing the genetic code for the COVID-19 virus.

**Will the Johnson & Johnson vaccine give me blood clots?** Probably not, and the risks from COVID are much greater. Only one out of a million had fatal blood clots after getting the J&J vaccine. COVID, however, has killed 125 out of every million people who get it, as reported in the New York Times.

"I was worried about getting seriously ill from COVID-19 because of my age and weight, so I got the shot as soon as I was eligible. Now I can see people for work, and see people I love, without worrying that it could kill me, or them." - Melvyn Colon

**Are there dangerous ingredients or tracking devices in the vaccines?** No. The COVID-19 vaccines contain mRNA and normal vaccine ingredients like fats, salts and sugar, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. They do not contain any implants, microchips or tracking devices.

**Will vitamins or minerals cure COVID?** No, they won't. Research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that neither hospitalized nor non-hospitalized COVID patients recovered any faster when given large amounts of vitamins C, D, or zinc.

**What does it cost?** Nothing. The vaccine is free for all CT residents, once your age group is eligible, and the vaccine is paid for by the federal government. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) you will not be charged a fee or a co-pay, you will not be charged for an office visit, and you do not even need to have health insurance to get the vaccine.

**What if I'm not here legally?** The CDC says you are entitled to a free COVID-19 vaccine no matter what your immigration status is.

**How can I get the vaccine?** Registration was complicated at first, but now that the vaccine is more widely available there are many easy and convenient ways to register. You can use a computer or phone, or even drive up to local sites for your vaccine.

**TO SCHEDULE YOUR COVID-19  
VACCINATION APPOINTMENT**  
Call the Hispanic Health Council  
(860) 500-3832  
or visit  
[www.harthosp.org](http://www.harthosp.org) or [www.hartford.gov](http://www.hartford.gov)

**Which vaccine is best?** Hartford Healthcare says not to waste your time trying to figure this out because the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are all great. Eric Arlia, Hartford HealthCare's Senior Director of Pharmacy, says Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines reduced the risk of infection by 90 percent two weeks after the second shot, and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 86 percent effective at preventing severe COVID-19 cases.

**Will I get vaccine side effects?** You might. Many people get a sore arm from the needle, and some people experience flu-like symptoms, especially after their second dose. As reported in the New York Times, up to half the people felt tired, had muscle pain, or got chills and fever. This simply means your immune system is working, which is good. Most symptoms last just a day or two, and, as with vaccines for other diseases, women tend to have stronger reactions. Therefore, it's smart to schedule your vaccination when you can slow down for a day or two, just in case.

**Should I get vaccinated if I might be pregnant?** Probably. We do know pregnant women are likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. The World Health Organization recently said there is no "reason to believe there (are) specific risks that...outweigh the benefits of vaccination for pregnant women." This also applies to women who are breastfeeding. The CDC is studying it and has not seen problems with pregnant women getting the vaccine. John Hopkins Medicine states the COVID-19 vaccine will not affect fertility, and that this myth came from a false report in social media which confused the COVID spike protein with an entirely different protein in the placenta.

**What if I have underlying conditions?** As long as you don't have severe allergic reactions to any of the ingredients, you can be vaccinated. In fact, the CDC says that for certain medical conditions, it's especially important to get the vaccine because you are more likely to get seriously ill from COVID. Medical issues that make you more vulnerable to COVID include cancer, kidney disease, asthma and other lung diseases, dementia, diabetes, heart conditions, HIV, liver disease, obesity, smoking, strokes, and substance abuse.

**Who is most vulnerable to COVID?** The CDC reports that more than 80% of COVID-19 deaths occur in people over age 65, and more than 95% of COVID-19 deaths occur in people older than 45. The CDC also says people from racial and ethnic minorities are at greater risk because, as a group, they have been subjected to long-standing health and social inequities. Therefore, they tend to get chronic medical conditions at younger ages and should get the vaccine as soon as possible.

**Will the vaccine change my DNA or cause long-term effects?** No, it won't. The CDC and New York Times websites explain that the three vaccines approved for use teach our bodies to recognize and fight COVID. Johns Hopkins Medicine says that while vaccines using messenger RNA do enter cells, they do not enter the nucleus of the cells where the DNA is.

**Do vaccines work against new variants of COVID?** According to the New York Times, both Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines were effective against variants of the coronavirus first found in Britain and South Africa, and now spreading here. Both companies are developing booster shots against the variants, just like slightly different flu shots are created each year.

**Can I have a normal life after the vaccine?** Two weeks after your second shot (or your only shot, if it's Johnson & Johnson) the CDC says you can visit with other vaccinated people and be less concerned about some everyday activities. However, you still need masks and distancing around strangers or vulnerable loved ones because, even though you probably won't get sick, you might still be able to spread COVID.

## How long does the vaccine last?

We don't know yet, according to the CDC. While it's being studied the safest thing is to get vaccinated, since we know COVID-19 has caused serious illness and death for millions of people. Hartford Healthcare reports protection lasted three months for people in clinical trials, which is how long they were tracked. It's possible it lasts much longer. According to a survey of epidemiologists, virologists and infectious disease specialists, recently published by the People's Vaccine Alliance, vaccines could become ineffective against COVID variants within a year. The New York Times says vaccinations could become an annual event, like the flu shot.

"For me, it was fear – the thought of being in a hospital room without loved ones, of not being able to hug. Getting the vaccine is how I'm protecting my friends and family, by being responsible and not believing myths. I felt like the vaccine injected hope into my life." - Elsa Huertas

COVID can cause death, and Dr. Anuj Vohra, Medical Director of Emergency Services at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington, reminds us that "the vaccine puts us more into the flu-like category. It doesn't feel good, but it's temporary. It's very important to get the vaccine, to save lives and help prevent the spread to others we care about and love."