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Six COVID-19 Vaccine Myths: Fact or Fiction?

San Luis Obispo, CA — With the recent release of two COVID-19 vaccines, more misinformation is spreading online. County officials remind community members to look to trusted, credible sources for accurate information.

“With so many people searching for answers, it is easy for misinformation to spread quickly,” said Dr. Penny Borenstein, County Health Officer. “I encourage anyone looking for answers on vaccines to note where that information is coming from, and always check credible sources first. While the Internet is a useful tool for researching health-related issues, it does not replace a discussion with a public health or healthcare professional.”

Top 6 COVID-19 Myths Found on the Internet:

1. **Fiction:** There are leftover vaccines at the end of the day, and you can walk up to get one.

Fact: Leftover doses will not be administered to people who show up without an appointment at the end of the day expecting vaccine. Near the end of the day, County-run vaccine clinics may find that they have several extra doses of vaccine, due to no-show appointments or because there were remaining doses from opened vials. While this rarely happens, there is a process to ensure that vaccines are not wasted. To avoid waste, we quickly and efficiently administer any excess doses at the end of the day to clinic staff, available first responders or emergency workers, or transfer those doses to another vaccine location awaiting additional doses. In either case, walk-ins at the end of the day will not be vaccinated.

2. **Fiction:** If you make an appointment and are not eligible, you will still get the vaccine.

Fact: Vaccine clinic staff will politely turn you away if you make an appointment but are not eligible to receive a vaccine at this time. With limited vaccine supply, the County is first vaccinating those most at risk for exposure and serious health outcomes. Visit www.RecoverSLO.org/vaccine to see who is currently eligible in SLO County. Remember, vaccines are provided by appointment only to those who are eligible.

3. **Fiction:** A doctor’s note will help you get an appointment sooner.

Fact: At this time, due to vaccine shortages across the nation, vaccine eligibility in SLO County is based on risk of exposure and age. Underlying health conditions are not currently a factor. Find out when it is your turn to get vaccinated at www.RecoverSLO.org/vaccine.

4. **Fiction:** Once vaccinated, you do not need to wear a mask or socially distance.

Fact: You can still get the virus several weeks after getting vaccinated. You should still wear a mask in public, frequently wash your hands, and keep your distance from others to avoid being exposed to the virus or spreading it. Experts are still learning about the protection that the vaccine provides and will update public health guidelines as new information becomes available. (CDC)

5. **Fiction:** You are immediately protected against COVID-19 once vaccinated.

Fact: You can still get the virus several weeks after getting vaccinated. Protection begins to build soon after you receive the first dose but takes both doses and at least two weeks after the second dose for the vaccine to reach the 94% to 95% efficacy that the manufacturers found in their initial vaccine trials. While protection is not immediate once the vaccine enters your arm, researchers found there was a noticeable drop-off in new COVID-19 cases in those vaccinated (compared to the placebo group) starting about 10 days after the first shot. The important thing to remember is that getting vaccinated is not an immediate cure-all and you must continue to take protective measures to protect yourself and those around you.

6. **Fiction:** The vaccines are not safe.

Fact: The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been through rigorous testing and an extensive review process nationally and additionally by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup, and the State of California. The vaccines are showing 94% to 95% efficacy in preventing COVID-19.

Before considering vaccine information on the Internet, check that the information comes from a credible source and is updated on a regular basis. The County Public Health Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's vaccines and immunization web content is researched, written, and approved by subject matter experts, including physicians, researchers, epidemiologists, and analysts. Science and public health data are frequently updated.

As you look online for vaccine information, consider guidance from these sources:

- County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department: www.recover slo.org/vaccine
- California Department of Public Health: www.covid19.ca.gov/vaccines
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19
- National Institutes of Health: <https://covid19.nih.gov/>
- U.S. Food & Drug Administration: www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines

For more information, visit www.ReadySLO.org or call the recorded Public Health Information Line at (805) 788-2903. A staffed phone assistance center at (805) 543-2444 is available to assist with questions related to COVID-19 Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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