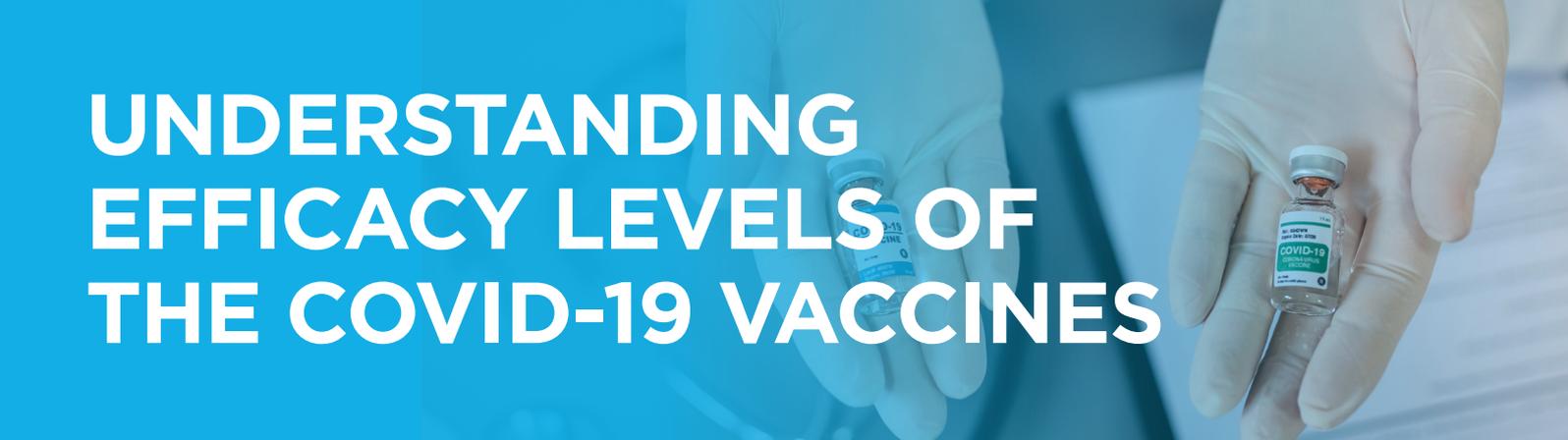


UNDERSTANDING EFFICACY LEVELS OF THE COVID-19 VACCINES



Vaccines can prevent serious illness, hospitalization, or death after being infected by COVID-19.¹

We know this because several clinical trials of approved COVID-19 vaccines found up to 100% efficacy in preventing severe symptoms, which could cause hospitalization and death from COVID-19 infection.^{1,2}

The new COVID-19 vaccines have been produced at record speed due to unparalleled investment and global scientific collaboration.³

Clinical trials of the approved vaccines have found different efficacy rates – but what does that mean?¹

Efficacy vs. effectiveness

Although they may sound similar, in medical research the two terms actually have specific meanings⁴:

- **Efficacy** refers to what the COVID-19 vaccine can achieve in controlled conditions like a clinical trial where many factors that could affect results are minimized.
- **Effectiveness** is what the intervention can achieve in real life where there are more factors that can have an impact on results.

Comparing the vaccines

Comparing the efficacy of one vaccine against another is not really possible, as the clinical trials were all set up slightly differently. The trials looked at severe symptoms that could lead to hospitalization and even death, but some also looked at mild symptoms or tracked COVID-19 through testing when there were no symptoms.¹ Each vaccine was also studied in various populations against the COVID-19 variants circulating at that time.⁵

Determining a good level of efficacy

Vaccine efficacy is set against the disease they prevent. Due to COVID-19 being considered a serious disease, the threshold for efficacy was set at 50%. This means that on the balance of risk, any

People are considered vaccinated two weeks after the second vaccine dose - or the first dose for single-shot vaccines.

The current advice is to continue social distancing and wearing a mask when with unvaccinated people.⁶

COVID-19 vaccine with an efficacy of 50% or over is classed as worth taking.¹

Choosing to wait for a preferred vaccine

COVID-19 vaccines are currently in limited supply, and are being rolled out according to prioritization.⁷ Everyone offered a vaccine has the opportunity not only to protect themselves, but also those closest to them from serious illness, even death, and to help stop transmission in the wider community.

Waiting for a preferred vaccine would ultimately mean you and others would be at risk for longer. Another concern is that the more the virus passes through the population the more chance it has to create a vaccine-resistant mutation.⁷ Therefore, getting as many people vaccinated as soon as possible is vital. Emerging research from vaccination rollouts in Israel and the UK show vaccines are highly effective at preventing deaths and serious illness from COVID-19.^{9,10}

Visit the [World Health Organization](#) or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for more information.

If you have any questions about COVID-19 vaccinations, please contact your Cigna representative.

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