READINESS BULLETIN # 144
TO VACCINATE OR NOT?

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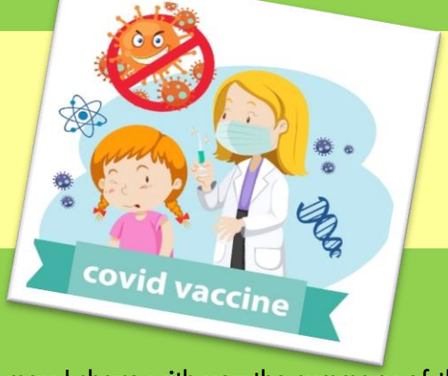

The speed in which the number of COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out makes most of us wary about receiving it. Are all these vaccines against COVID-19 safe?

To help us decide whether we want to get the vaccine or not- may I share with you the summary of the Position Statements of the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology On COVID-19 Vaccines and their Adverse Reactions as of February 1, 2021.

These statements were developed by the COVID-19 Vaccine Adverse Reaction Task Force of the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (PSAAI)

SUMMARY

- The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest global health challenge the world has faced.
- COVID-19 vaccination may provide protection and herd immunity which may be the solution to this global health problem.
- Several kinds of vaccines have been developed. With the spike protein being the major virulent factor used by the SARS CoV-2 virus to enter and infect human cells, many of the COVID-19 vaccines use this to stimulate the immune system through different platforms: messenger RNA (mRNA), viral vectors, protein subunit or inactivated virus.
- Adverse reactions to vaccines may occur and can range from **reactogenic** reactions **(inflammatory response that occurs after vaccination)** to **allergic** reactions **(an exaggerated immune response to a usually harmless substance).** A REACTOGENIC REACTION is not the same as an ALLERGIC REACTION.
- Majority of COVID-19 vaccine adverse reactions are mild. **Reactogenic reactions** include pain, tenderness and swelling and can be managed with supportive care. Mild allergic reactions such as rashes can be managed with antihistamines.
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- **The risk of severe allergic reactions, such as anaphylaxis, is rare.** However, it should be recognized and managed promptly with EPINEPHRINE 0.3-0.5ml IM. It is therefore essential that all vaccinees should be observed for at least 30 minutes post-vaccination at vaccination centers.
- Healthcare practitioners who will be vaccinating against COVID-19 must be sufficiently trained to properly recognize and manage anaphylaxis. Vaccination centers must be equipped with the proper medications necessary to manage immediate allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis.
- **The only current contraindication to covid-19 vaccination is an immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose of covid-19 vaccine and any of its components.**
- Patients with allergic reactions to other types of vaccines and injectable medications should be evaluated by an allergist prior to COVID-19 vaccination.
- Patients with allergic reactions to food, inhalant/environmental allergens, insects, latex, oral medications, not related to vaccines and their components, can receive COVID-19 vaccines.
- Patients with immunodeficiency and autoimmune disease (e.g. Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Bell's palsy) may also get vaccinated but they should be informed that there is still not enough data available to establish vaccine safety and efficacy in these conditions.
- Patients with well-controlled asthma and on inhaled corticosteroids, and those with allergic rhinitis on intranasal corticosteroids can receive COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Based On Current Data, The Benefits Of These Vaccines To The General Public Far Outweigh The Potential Risks Of Adverse Reaction To Covid-19 Vaccines, As Well As To The Risk Of Developing Severe Covid-19 And Death.**

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