

Group & Individual News

COVID-19 Conversations: How were vaccines developed so quickly?

The federal government, under the umbrella of [Operation Warp Speed](#), worked with researchers to develop COVID-19 vaccines faster than ever before, but this doesn't mean safety measures were skipped. Here are some of the reasons why COVID-19 vaccines were developed faster than other traditional vaccines:

- **Advanced funding:** The federal government gave funding to pharmaceutical companies in advance. This cut back on paperwork and administrative approvals so companies could get started on vaccine development sooner.
- **Pre-production of vaccines:** Companies also started manufacturing vaccines ahead of their final authorization so some supplies could be ready for distribution as soon as they were recommended for use.
- **Messenger RNA technology:** The first approved COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer are created with messenger RNA (mRNA). While mRNA vaccines are new, researchers have been studying them for decades. Our cells use mRNA to make proteins. mRNA vaccines use that process to make viral proteins that trigger an immune response inside our bodies. This immune response produces antibodies which protect us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies. Because these types of vaccines can be developed in a lab with readily available materials, the process can be standardized and scaled up to make vaccine development much faster than traditional methods.
- **Clinical trials:** Public interest and social media made it easier and faster to find volunteers to participate in research studies. Many tens of thousands of people of varying age, race, ethnicity, and different medical conditions have participated in the trials. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic also allowed researchers to quickly understand whether the vaccines were protective against disease.
- **Working more efficiently:** Testing for the vaccines didn't skip any steps, but vaccine developers were able to conduct some [phases of clinical research](#) simultaneously to save time. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), "follow up for the COVID-19 vaccines was as thorough as it is for any vaccine."

These are just a few of the factors that contributed to the accelerated development of COVID-19 vaccines while still meeting the same testing and safety standards as other vaccines. We hope you'll share this information with your clients who may have questions about the safety and development of COVID-19 vaccines.

Bookmark Anthem's [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) site for important updates and helpful tools and resources. Share our [COVID-19 Test Site Finder](#) with your clients to help members find nearby testing locations.

State(s): CO, CT, GA, IN, KY, ME, MO, NH, NV, OH, VA, WI

Segment(s): *Small Group, Large Group, Individual*