

PRINT-COVID-19 Vaccines Safe for People Taking Medication

While stories of people clamoring for a COVID-19 vaccine are dominating headlines, a [recent survey by CNN](#) shows 1 in 4 people are hesitant to get vaccinated.

There are many reasons for the hesitation – among them is a concern the vaccine will negatively interact with medication someone is taking to manage a chronic or acute condition. Mark Meeker, DO, vice president of physician services for OSF HealthCare, says there is ongoing reporting to a federal vaccine surveillance system and so far, there is no indication any of the available COVID-19 vaccines interact negatively with prescription medication.

Dr. Meeker explains, “Right now I would say the potential with a drug-drug interaction with the COVID vaccines, causing a clinically significant issue, are extremely low. That’s what I see in the literature so far.”

People with a variety of medical conditions taking medication to control their condition were included in the vaccine trials, according to Dr. Meeker. Although vaccines and medications can sometimes affect each other, these interactions don’t usually cause serious problems. For example, a small change in how quickly a medication is activated can be influenced by a vaccine, but Dr. Meeker says the impact is so slight, it doesn’t change its overall effectiveness.

“So it’s in the literature. It’s out there. People get excited about it. But, from a clinical standpoint, it doesn’t appear we’re seeing significant adverse events from that interaction.”

The bottom line, Dr. Meeker says becoming infected with the virus is far more dangerous than getting the vaccine, especially for people who have underlying health conditions that require prescription medication.

“If they have any concerns whatsoever, talk to your physician about it or your nurse practitioner or your PA (physician assistant), whoever you see for your primary needs. Talk to them about it, that’s the best way to alleviate your fears,” Dr. Meeker suggests.

The Washington Post recently reported some people who have spent months suffering from [long-haul COVID-19](#) are taking to social media to report their delight at seeing their symptoms disappear after being vaccinated, but Dr. Meeker says much more research is needed in that area.

“I saw one report of an observation that a group (of researchers) made that they thought people with long, lingering symptoms seemed to recover quicker when they got vaccinated but that’s not hard-based evidence yet.”

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s leading infectious disease doctor and medical advisor to the president, has stressed the success in fighting COVID-19 relies on vaccinating as many Americans as quickly and safely as possible. With so many people still reluctant, health leaders, including Dr. Meeker, are concerned vaccine hesitancy could mean it will take longer to move to a point where we won’t need to wear masks, physically distance or quarantine.