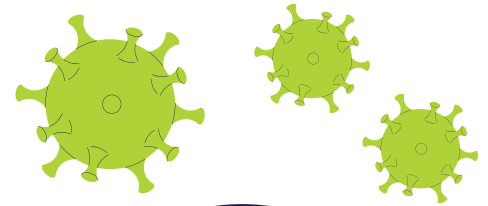


# How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work (Pfizer, Moderna)

## What causes COVID-19 illness?

A coronavirus causes COVID-19. Coronaviruses are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called spike proteins. These spike proteins are ideal targets for vaccines.



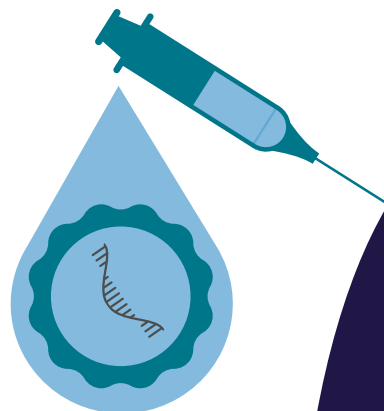
## What is mRNA?

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is genetic material already in your body that tells your body how to make proteins.



## What is in the vaccine?

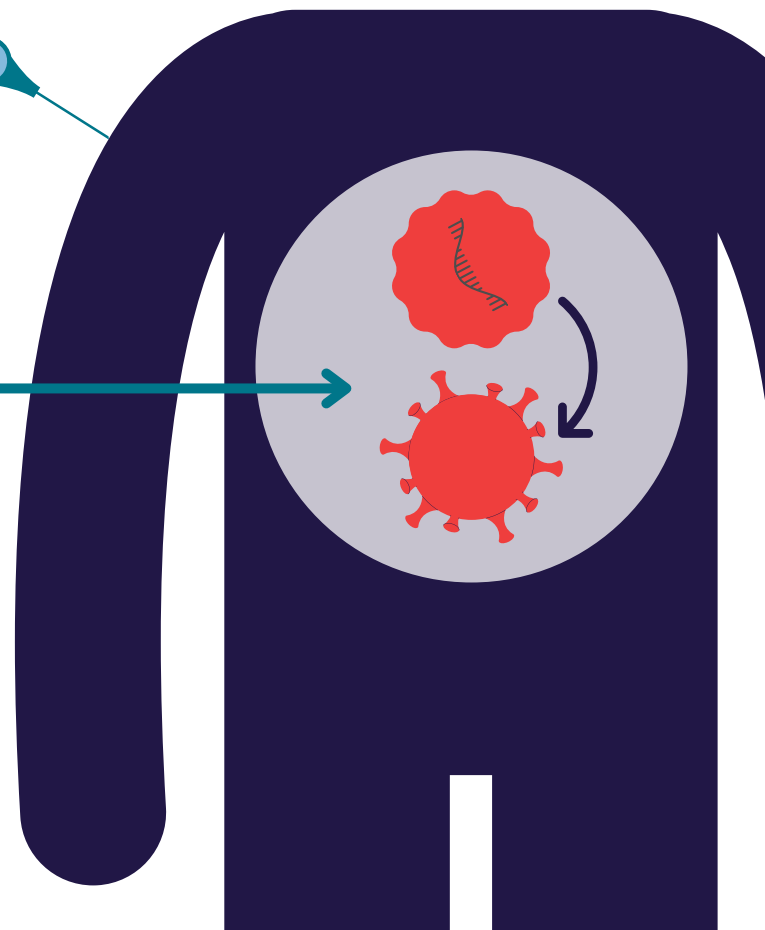
The vaccine is made of mRNA wrapped in a coating that makes delivery easy and keeps the body from damaging it. The vaccine DOES NOT contain any virus, so it cannot give you COVID-19 or change your DNA in any way.



## How does the vaccine work?

The mRNA in the vaccine teaches your cells how to make copies of the spike protein. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off. After the mRNA delivers the instructions, your cells break it down and get rid of it.

When your body responds to the vaccine, it can sometimes cause a mild fever, headache, or chills. This is completely normal and a sign that the vaccine is working.



Find a vaccine near you:

- Scan the code
- Visit [MeckNC.gov/COVID-19](https://www.MeckNC.gov/COVID-19)
- Call 980-314-9400, Option 3 (English) or Option 8 (Spanish)



MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
North Carolina

Public Health