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# DEBUNKING

## COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy

### FOR THE VACCINE TO SUCCEED, A HIGH RATE OF ACCEPTANCE IS NECESSARY



**Dr. Corin DeChirico**  
Guest Columnist

With seniors willing to stand in line to get the COVID-19 vaccine, fear and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy seems to have lessened.

However, before COVID-19, the World Health Organization in 2019 declared vaccine hesitancy a Top 10 threat to global health. Fear of vaccines for other illnesses include the vaccines themselves, political factors and vaccine-related attitudes and beliefs.

During the pandemic, misinformation in popular and social media included conspiracy theories about the pandemic and the vaccination. As a result, this led some people to be fearful or skeptical about the effectiveness, safety and need for the vaccine.

BioSpace.com, a Life Science industry news and information source, finds that 47% of Americans are still hesitant to get the vaccine, including some frontline workers. In addition, an ABC poll found 44% of respondents prefer to wait and see how the vaccine performs in others.

**See VACCINE, Page 5C**

## Top 5 reasons to invest in personal training this year



**Fitness**  
Angie Ferguson  
Guest columnist

From helping you reach your fitness goals to figuring out how to exercise safely with a chronic condition, hiring a personal training may be the best investment you'll make in your overall health and well-being and here's why.

**1. Get professional training from a fitness expert.** Qualified personal trainers have academic and practical experience of anatomy, physiology, nutrition, developing exercise programs and prescribing them, sports technologies, and many other physical and mental health disciplines. They act as your coach and are on your side, able to motivate you, offer a confidence boost,

**See TRAINING, Page 2C**

## Unhealthy diet can lead to poor quality of life

**Leigha Messner RDN, LD, CNSC**  
Guest Columnist  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

March is National Nutrition Month and a great opportunity to learn more about nutrition and how to incorporate healthful eating into your nutrition plan.

Created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the campaign was de-

signed to encourage consumers to make informed food choices while also promoting overall healthy lifestyles through diet and physical activity.

Nutrition is an essential aspect to a healthy lifestyle. An unhealthy diet contributes to approximately 678,000 deaths each year due to nutrition- and obesity-related diseases such as heart

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# Vaccine

Continued from Page 1C

The American Medical Association has found there are several common reasons for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy:

- Fear of the vaccine's safety.
- The vaccine trials were not diverse enough.
- The vaccine will give you COVID-19.
- The shot has side effects.
- Some prefer to wait for natural immunity.

Here are the truths about the above reasons:

- Instead of skipping development steps, Operation Warp Speed allowed approval steps to be completed at the same time. This allowed the process to cut red tape, not steps.

- The National Medical Association, the largest organization for African American physicians and their patients, is confident in the diversity of the trials.

- The vaccines do not contain live virus, which means they cannot give a person COVID-19.

- Very few of those vaccinated can have side effects that require medical attention.

- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. However, experts do not know for sure how long this protection lasts. As a result, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. Plus, the COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.

For the vaccine to succeed in stopping the virus, a high rate of acceptance is necessary. The Centers for Disease Control offer these reasons to get the vaccine:

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will protect you and your family.

- COVID-19 infections can result in longer-lasting and debilitating health problems such as fatigue, headaches, joint pain and sleep difficulty. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you.

- Substantial evidence exists regarding the safety of the vaccine, which has been demonstrated on tens of thousands of patients.

- The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine.

- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. However, these measures are not enough. Vaccines get your immune system ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.

To help people understand why getting the vaccine is important, we asked our providers and partners why they are getting the vaccine.

"I chose to get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect myself and those around me, because like trees in a forest, we are all connected." - *Dr. Filadelfo Larios, Dental Care*

"I chose to get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect myself, my family and every-



**Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. However, these measures are not enough. Vaccines get your immune system ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.** JON AUSTRIA/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

body around me including our patients, and to significantly decrease severity of the disease if I get infected." - *Dr. Dusan Sabol, Family Care*

"I believe it can prevent me and others from getting sick from the virus." - *Dr. Jean Mesidor, Behavioral Health*

"Over the course of this pandemic, I think there have been times where a lot of people have just felt really helpless and hopeless. Getting the vaccine, I feel like there's something in my control. I feel hopeful." - *Dr. Courtney L. Whitt, Director of Behavioral Health*

"As a health care worker, it's my responsibility to assure the wellbeing of everyone" - *Fabricio Pensalfini, dental assistant*

"It's important for me to be healthy in order to serve my patients and the community." - *Michael Alexander Rodriguez, Clinical Health Psychology Post-doctoral Fellow*

Also, other providers said getting the vaccine will help them do their part to end the pandemic.

"Vaccines are proven to be the most effective and efficient way of dealing with communicable diseases and having these available is a Godsend!" - *Dr. Jose Quero, Family Care*

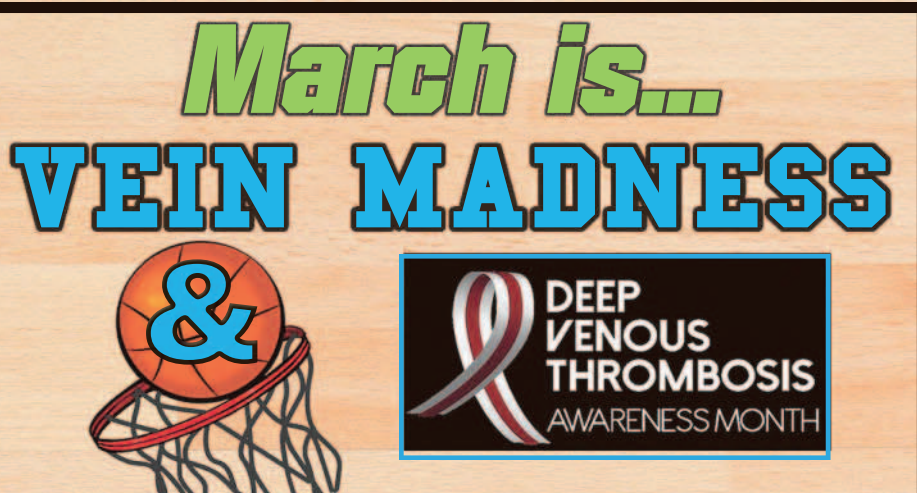
"Just like my patients put their health in my hands, I trust the brilliant scientists and doctors that came up with this vaccine to help us all get past these hard times." - *Dr. Julie Mancera Loftin, Dental Care*

"I want to help protect myself, my family, and my community. Together, we will beat COVID-19!" - *Caroline Murtagh, Partners in Health*

"I want to help end the pandemic. If we all do this small act, our collective action can save lives." - *Dr. Giuliana Farias McQuirt, Family Care*

"I researched and prayed about it and determined it to be the right thing to do for all of us." - *Amelia Bell-Hawkins, APRN, Family Care*

*Dr. Corin DeChirico is vice president of medical staff and chief medical officer for Healthcare Network. For information on Healthcare Network's COVID-19 efforts, visit <https://healthcarewfl.org/>.*



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