



## The COVID Vaccine: What Will You Do?

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In November I sent an email message that suggested some good health advice for Thanksgiving. That advice included a link published by Exercise is Medicine (EIM) that discussed Physical Activity, COVID-19 and Older Adults. Here is the link in case you did not review the information previously:

[https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support\\_page.php/stories/?b=918&fbclid=IwAR0iMRVceiPXIq-SDhV6jwPrBKtBAnzh2\\_nftITeM6Z-XAFw9dKcCYsdFbl](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support_page.php/stories/?b=918&fbclid=IwAR0iMRVceiPXIq-SDhV6jwPrBKtBAnzh2_nftITeM6Z-XAFw9dKcCYsdFbl)

Now that the COVID vaccine is nearly ready for distribution, most Americans will need to decide if the vaccine is right for them or not. Previous research with other vaccines (i.e. flu) has shown that individuals who are physically active (cardiovascular/strength/balance activities) have more success in their bodies accepting the vaccine with fewer side effects. We can only assume that intuitively this will be true for COVID vaccine. Compromised immune systems can blunt the effectiveness of a vaccine. I have reported on numerous occasions that one very important benefit of physical activity is an enhanced immune system – one that can better fight off infections and viruses. This is very important for older individuals who naturally with age have a less effective immune system. Physical activity will help to slow the aging process of the immune system.

Further the EIM article went on to say that physical activity just prior to getting the vaccine can reduce the tenderness and swelling at the injection site and in some cases the ill feeling shortly after the vaccination.

If you elect to go forward with the COVID vaccine, begin now to prepare your body to receive the vaccine and to gain all of its benefits. If you have not been physically active, start a walking program or some other exercise that you like (as in the past,

always check with your physician before beginning a new exercise program). If you are already physically active, increase the duration and/or intensity of your workouts.

There are so many positive health (physical, emotional and mental) benefits from a physically active lifestyle and healthy diet that go beyond the immune system and the COVID vaccine. This holiday and Christmas season treat yourself to the gift of improved health through physical activity and healthy eating.