



Clinical Alliance for Research and Education - Infectious Diseases

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## Are Vaccines Really Important, Do We Really Need Them?

**Annandale, VA; August 16, 2022** - At CARE-ID they're really, really important. It's what we work on studying nearly every day. However, this is also an important question that every responsible, self-sufficient adult may want to prepare themselves to answer.

Our viral infections experiences since March of 2020 have for nearly everyone been simply, "overwhelming". SARS-Cov-2 (COVID-19) hit us out of nowhere and frightened many all the way back to the experiences of the 1918 "Spanish Flu" pandemic. Most didn't know how bad 1918 to 1920 was but learned rather quickly<sup>1</sup>. Less apocalyptic viruses preceded COVID such as: SARS, Zika, and Chikungunya outbreaks, but weren't widespread. Nevertheless, these were early warnings that the expanse of infectious diseases has grown to be more challenging than ever before. Now another new warning has emerged in monkeypox. And "wait for it", another new one was just announced by researchers, the novel Langya henipavirus (LayV)<sup>2</sup>. One might ask is there an end in sight or is this a "new normal"? And can we find our way out of this safely?

Well part of the answer lies in our experiences from the middle 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Communicable, highly infectious diseases like flu, polio, measles, and tuberculosis that previously spread unchecked caused major public health scares too, especially among our children. These experiences caused the creation of invaluable public health resources and medical defenses such as medicines and vaccines that prevented many more people from getting sick and dying. The outcomes produced grew out of evidence-based clinical and community activities and services<sup>3</sup>.

With respect to the challenges of today, our legacy resources have now become ever more indispensable. Without these foundational experiences we would have been totally defenseless against COVID-19 taking us right back to 1918. Looking back from this point in 2022, we can see the toll it has taken. But even more striking is that we can also see that it could have been far worse without the actions of dedicated infectious diseases scientists who created the first mRNA vaccines working together with our public health resources with unprecedented speed.

Thinking about the question, "how important are vaccines", the brief history outlined above holds much of the answer. That is, they are extremely important in preventing severe, even life-threatening diseases and saving lives. So, as new viruses emerge into our ever increasing and globally connected national and world populations what are our defenses? The first line is surveillance, spotting them as soon as possible. The second line is swift infectious diseases scientific analysis of the virus's nature, our vulnerabilities and its weaknesses. The third is development of treatments to help those first infected if possible. The fourth is prevention which is the realm of vaccines. Perhaps the fourth is most important to protecting the lives and livelihoods we've come to cherish in our free, highly mobile and modern society. Because without preventative vaccines the one certain defense that prevents enormous suffering, death and devastation is isolation. Recent and current experiences indicate that's not a long term nor acceptable solution.

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<sup>1</sup> influenza pandemic of 1918–19, Britannica, July 14, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/science/influenza>

<sup>2</sup> Newly-discovered Langya virus infected 35 people in China, LiveScience, August 10, 2022, <https://www.livescience.com/china-detects-new-langyu-virus>

<sup>3</sup> Immunization and Infectious Diseases, Healthy People.gov, 2020 Topics & Objectives, <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases>

If the thought of vaccines is overwhelming, or you're hesitant about them, you're not alone. The pace of how we live today is dizzying. Demands of jobs, family, friends, community and more seem to come faster every day. So, when it comes to a vaccine and the prospect of a "future" threat even one that might make us seriously ill or kill us, we tend to put it aside. We think I have more important things to attend to right now. We say we'll get to it when less busy. Or, worse, we claim we just don't have the attention bandwidth to comprehend it and we're just tired of dealing with the possibilities and the choices<sup>4</sup>. As easy as it is to take such a position it overlooks the wrenching remorse one will undoubtedly feel if that "bad thing" happens. Again, imagine for a moment where we would be if not for learning the lessons 1918 taught us and then applying them throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. There are countless stories of those who wished they had made a different choice about COVID.

We, us, citizens, as a society committed to the common good, have done it before; and it has worked. Following this successful pattern of behavior and action is a highly productive course. Added to that we now have better scientific tools than ever before at our disposal to understand infectious diseases like viruses and rapidly response. So, the question becomes, what will everyday people (a country's citizenry), the backbone of its vitality, do in response to these new, quickening threats. Will they throw up their hands, bicker, and do little to nothing. Or will they decide to build on past successes, follow the science and fight with all the tools available. Not an easy question, but it is one each of us must ponder and answer as responsible members of our communities.

At CARE-ID we're applying the lessons. Our physician investigator leaders have decades of experience treating and researching treatments for some of the worst infectious diseases. That experience includes inviting and supporting individuals in our area to participate in clinical trials to research and create better medicines. In 2020, we focused our experience and resources to work on the COVID-19 vaccine development challenge. Our efforts and success became successes for our volunteers, our community and our country. These results tell us we absolutely must keep going as each new virus emerges. However, we can't do this alone. Members of our community are essential partners in each new research effort to find the best and safest vaccine solutions. We don't intend to stop. We implore you not to stop either. Someday, somewhere someone's life will very likely depend on it.

Vaccine studies currently enrolling and upcoming at CARE-ID are:

- A combo M-A COVID Preventer for immunocompromised persons with Astra Zeneca
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for older adults with Bavarian Nordic
- COVID vaccine booster for individuals between 12 and 30 with Pfizer
- Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) vaccine for older adults with Janssen
- mRNA influenza vaccine with Pfizer

Anyone interested in participating in one our studies or needing more information about one of our studies should contact CARE-ID directly.

Read more at: <http://www.careidresearch.com/studies.html>

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**About CARE-ID**

CARE-ID conducts clinical research trials in the field of infectious diseases with particular focus on the safety and confidentiality of participants, quality of data, and integrity of results. It partners with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to develop experimental therapies for both the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases.

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<sup>4</sup> Mind the "Vaccine Fatigue", *Frontiers in Immunology*, 10 March 2022, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fimmu.2022.839433/full>