What is the coronavirus?
The coronavirus can cause the illness called COVID-19. COVID-19 is a dangerous lung disease. It is very contagious. Many people have become ill because of COVID-19. Some people have had to go to hospital. Many people have died from COVID-19.

But you can protect yourself against it.
For example, you can:
- Keep you distance from other people.
- Wash your hands often.
- Wear a mask.
- Get a vaccine.

There is good news. You can get a vaccine!
Previously, we could not do a lot to fight the COVID-19 illness. There are no good medicines. But now there is a vaccine. The vaccine protects you against catching COVID-19. Nobody has to have the vaccine. The vaccine is voluntary.

What happens in your body when you have the vaccine?
When the virus enters our body, our immune system reacts. The body makes antibodies against the virus. The immune system has a memory. It remembers every virus. And that is how vaccines work. A vaccine is injected into a person, for example. Then the body creates antibodies against the virus. This means that the body can defend itself more quickly when the virus enters the body. Then people do not get ill or are only slightly ill.

When does the vaccine start working? How long does the protection last?
Most vaccines start to work after a few weeks. Some vaccines protect you for your whole life. Other vaccines have to be repeated after a few years. It is still not known how long the vaccine will protect against the coronavirus. Also, many viruses change. The flu virus does this, for example. That is why we have to be vaccinated against flu every year. We will probably have to have another vaccine against coronavirus too after a while.
Does a vaccine have side effects?
A vaccine can have side effects. That is normal. Side effects show that the immune system is working. Side effects are not usually dangerous.
Side effects might be:
Redness, swelling or pain at the place where you had the vaccine.
Fever, headaches and muscle pain are also possible or you might feel unwell.
The side effects often go away again after a few days.
Bad side effects are rare. A doctor can give you advice.

Can I get ill even if I have the vaccine?
Vaccines can have different effects.
Sometimes people can get ill even though they have had the vaccine.
But usually people who have had the vaccine only get a bit ill.

There are different vaccines. What is the difference?
Many experts have researched vaccines against the coronavirus.
And now they have found even more vaccines.
They have to be approved before they can be used in Germany. Over time, more and more different vaccines will be approved.

Inactivated vaccines contain vaccines that have been killed.
The vaccines by Novavax, Sinopharm and Sinovac are inactivated vaccines against the coronavirus.

mRNA vaccines against the coronavirus are produced by BioNTech / Pfizer, Moderna and CureVac.
mRNA is short for messenger ribonucleic acid.
mRNA transports important information, such as the coronavirus blueprint. In the mRNA vaccine, a small part of the blueprint is injected. The body can then produce a little bit of coronavirus itself. For example, the spike protein of the coronavirus.
The spike protein is not dangerous. But the body can still form antibodies against it.

Vector vaccines against the coronavirus are produced by AstraZeneca and Johnson&Johnson, for example. The Sputnik V vaccine from Russia is also a vector vaccine. In Latin, the word vector means carrier or driver.
A vector vaccine contains a virus. People can get a cold from the virus. The virus is not dangerous. It cannot reproduce in the body.
But the virus is a kind of driver. It transports the blueprint for a part of the coronavirus.
The part is the spike protein. The spike protein is not dangerous. But the body can still make antibodies against it.

Source: Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe

Additional and current information can be found at: www.dortmund.de/corona and using QR code