Q: I already had COVID-19 and recovered. Why should I get the vaccine when my body is already immune to it now?

A: When someone has had an infection, and the body has produced antibodies as a result, this is called "natural immunity." But early evidence suggests natural immunity to COVID-19 may not be very long-lasting.

At least one study indicates that if you had COVID-19 and are not vaccinated, your risk of getting COVID-19 a second time are about two times greater than for people who were infected but did get vaccinated.

"Even if you've had COVID-19, whether it was a mild case or more severe, we still very much recommend that you get the vaccine," says Martin Herrmann, M.D., medical director of Mayo Clinic Health System in Waseca and New Prague. "It's important to do all you can to protect yourself against this virus. Plus, getting vaccinated protects others as well because it reduces the spread of COVID-19."