



BND BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT

Is immunity from COVID infection better than vaccine? Fact-checking Madison County claim

Lexi Cortes

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Madison County's government recently suggested that the [immunity people get against COVID-19](#) after catching the coronavirus could be more effective than the immunity provided by vaccines.

But is that true?

When asked about immunity from catching the virus compared to taking the vaccine, representatives from Gateway Regional Medical Center, Anderson Hospital, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said they [recommend vaccination](#).

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A resolution approved by the Madison County Board on Wednesday announced that it [opposes vaccination mandates](#) and stated that the county government “continues to support personal choice with regard to COVID-19 mitigation efforts, including recognizing an individual’s religious beliefs and medical history, such as naturally occurring antibodies which many argue are more effective than vaccinations.”

Board member Mick Madison, a Republican from Bethalto who wrote the resolution, said during Wednesday’s meeting that he is not opposed to vaccines, generally, but he chose not to take the COVID-19 vaccine because he has been infected.

“I’m not anti-vaccine at all. I have all my vaccines. I don’t have this one because I had COVID, and I have natural antibodies,” Madison said. “That’s the whole reason to get a vaccine: is to develop the antibodies, which I have.”

The CDC addressed the question of protection from past infection vs. vaccination in a statement to the press Wednesday.

The agency pointed to recent research that showed “with increasing time since prior infection, vaccination provides greater protection against COVID-19 compared to prior infection alone,” according to the CDC.

It noted that the coronavirus is constantly changing, and that can change the level of immunity that vaccination or prior infection can give someone.

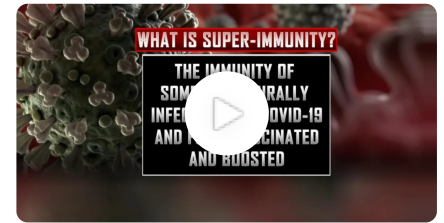
Today, experts believe “vaccination remains the safest strategy for protecting against COVID-19,” the CDC stated.

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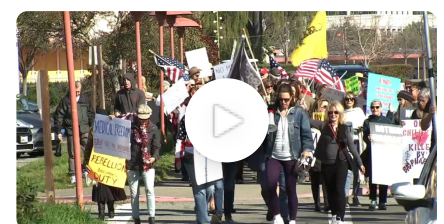
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vaccinated.

“As the understanding of immunity to COVID-19 evolves, we still feel the best protection is a vaccine with a booster,” Adams wrote in a statement to the BND. “Individuals who have contracted COVID-19 will have some immunity moving forward, however it is still recommended to get vaccinated per the CDC guidelines.”

Dr. Vinay Bhooma, the chief medical officer at St. Joseph’s Hospital, said Friday that the majority of patients in HSHS hospitals with COVID-19 are unvaccinated or did not receive their booster when they were eligible.

“HSHS has been and will continue advocating the COVID-19 vaccine to the general public and our colleagues,” Bhooma stated.

Madison County Health Department Director Toni Corona deferred comment to the Madison County Board office when asked about the county’s statement on vaccination in the resolution.

County Board Chairman Kurt Prenzler did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday afternoon.

The board was not in complete agreement on the resolution. The vote was 20-7.

Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Haine explained during Wednesday’s meeting that the purpose of the resolution was to signal that the county would not comply with any future COVID-19 vaccination mandates from the state or federal government that would apply to county employees.



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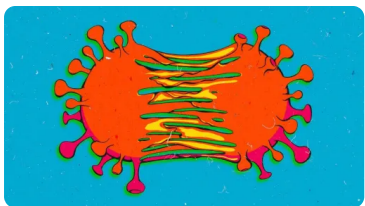
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