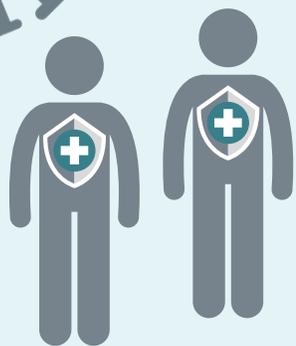


HOW DO VIRUSES MUTATE?

- All viruses mutate, or change, over time. Mutation can happen very slowly, or more quickly.
- The longer a virus sticks around, the more time it has to change. When a virus changes, it is called a **variant**.
- Many variants are no more harmful than the original virus, however, some can be more infectious or deadly.
- When our bodies are faced with a new variant, our immune response built from vaccination or a previous infection may be able to fight it off.

HOW CAN VACCINATION HELP?

- Vaccines reduce a virus's ability to infect people. This gives the virus less opportunities to mutate.
- Vaccines still provide protection against current variants since many characteristics of the virus remain the same.



The sooner people get vaccinated against COVID-19, the less opportunity we give the virus to continue mutating.