

Communities for Immunity: Stories about COVID The Peale, Baltimore | 2022

Aissata Sy (00:00): When the pandemic started last year in 2020, I was 16 years old and I was going to school. Then one day they told us that we were just going to go into quarantine and we wouldn't be in school for a period of amount of time. And that time went on and on and on until we hit lockdown. And during that time, around that time, I felt very paranoid to go outside and do basically anything I used to do, because I was just scared of the possibility of getting COVID. So I wouldn't go out as much. I had to wear the mask, which were very uncomfortable at time. And it made it very hard to breathe also at times.

Aissata Sy (00:51): Then when the pandemic was developed around later that year, I thought that it was made pretty quickly. And because of the misinformation going on in social media, like when they were saying that the vaccine could turn you into like an animal, like it could do something to your body that is just like... It shouldn't happen in your body. They're just saying a lot of things that I thought were true because I didn't know any better, I guess, and I didn't do my own research and things like that. And I just believed because it was my main source of information and news. So that information got to my head. And also I just started learning more and more about like the history of America and the history of them testing vaccines on black people and other people of color. And that fact also was like a scary fact because I was just thinking about... It made me very uncomfortable to even think about getting the vaccine.

Aissata Sy (02:08): And I just thought like, oh, I don't really trust this vaccine. I just was like, I don't know if I really want to get this. I just thought like vaccines usually take about five years to be created. And this one did not take anywhere near five years. So I was very unsure about it. But later on, as time went on and more and more information came in about the vaccine, I started to learn more about it. And my parents who had the same concerns basically that I had and other people in my family that I know and my friends, they had those same concerns, but they chose to do their own research and go get the vaccine because they believed that it was the best decision for them. And they told me that after they got their vaccine, they felt pretty normal. Like it was any other vaccine that they've ever gotten.

Aissata Sy (03:03): So after I got that information, I chose to do my own research. And through my own research, I learned a lot and I just felt more comfortable getting the vaccine because so many people around me were telling me that they had a positive experience to the vaccine and they had done their research and they just felt pretty comfortable getting it. So I did my own and I went to get it. And as I went to get it, the anticipation and just the anxiety of going to get that vaccine made me so nervous that I thought it was just those thoughts were still in the back of my mind. So when I actually went and got it, it was pretty easy. I felt like it was any other vaccine I've ever gotten.

Aissata Sy (03:50):

And I just felt pretty fine. I felt okay. I just felt like it was basically any other vaccine I've ever gotten in the past. And I just thought, oh, this is not as bad as I thought it would be. So the anticipation just was in just those thoughts that were still in my head was like they were kind of like getting to me, but I didn't let that get to me because I just knew that getting the vaccine was a better alternative for me than not having it. So yeah.

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