



COVID vaccines are coming

The COVID epidemic has spread all over the world. Normal flu seasons annually causes about 3-5 million serious illnesses, and about 250,000-500,000 patients die. Therefore, before the peak period of the spread of influenza every year, the government will order the implementation of corresponding measures to minimize harms and losses caused by influenza. Among them, a well-known measure is the flu vaccine.

In order to maintain health and avoid serious complications or deaths due to influenza, the Taiwan Ministry of Health and Welfare piloted the "Pioneer Plan for Influenza Vaccination for High-risk Elderly People over 65" in 1998. Afterward, it gradually expanded the implementation targets.

Personnel related to medical institutions, health institutions for epidemic prevention, and livestock breeding are included in publicly funded vaccinations. In addition, students of all ages, patients with high-risk chronic diseases, and pregnant women are included. This can protect infants, pregnant women, and those with serious or chronic diseases, and reduce medical expenses. As well, it can avoid the possibility of influenza pandemics which may be caused due to

the genetic recombination and animal influenza viruses.

Vaccines are mainly classified in two classes, including live attenuated vaccine and inactivated vaccine. Live attenuated vaccine injects a few processed pathogens into the body. These pathogens can irritate the immune system and produce antibodies. The inactivated vaccine injects dead germs or dead viral cells into the body. The inactivated vaccine does not cause infection, and is safe, but not as effective. Dosages can be raised so the vaccines prolong protection.

Our immune system has a unique mechanism, which is an important weapon to help defend against external pathogens, so it is not easy to develop a safe vaccine that can make the human body resistant. Generally speaking, the purpose of vaccinations is to help the body recognize the pathogen and resist the disease. The pathogen stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies, and these antibodies stay in our body for decades or even permanently, so that they can fight and destroy the pathogen immediately in response to the future.

Before you go to the hospital to be vaccinated, understand that if you have a fever or serious disease, you need to wait until your condition is stable so that you can be

vaccinated. In addition, if you have an allergy, you should tell your doctor in order to prevent a severe allergic reaction. Although the flu vaccine can prevent the flu, there are some side effects. The place that is vaccinated may be painful with swelling. This will usually recover within two days. Nevertheless, a few people may have severe side effects, such as immediate allergic reactions, anaphylactic shock, and difficulty breathing. If you find you have these symptoms, you must inform the doctor and have the symptoms treated immediately.

The Pfizer company in the U.S. has announced that a COVID vaccine will be ready soon, and that it is already 90% effective. The vaccine has not been thoroughly tested or approved by the U.S. government.

Flu vaccines prevent sickness, but are not totally effective. The flu vaccine can protect us, so take the time to receive the vaccine.

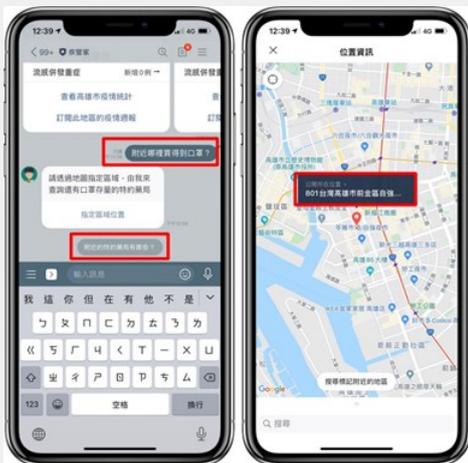
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Technology aids citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic

By Teresa Yu

When the COVID pandemic began to go out of control, many people started to buy face masks in Taiwan.



LINE application usage

The government asked people to wear face masks whenever they were outside. Consequently, many people started to hoard face masks, and that disallowed others to buy face masks. In order to solve the problem, the government announced all masks would be sold in appointed drug stores. Because of this restriction, many people complained that they did not know where to buy face masks. Therefore, the Taiwanese government developed a system combining LINE, which is a com-

mon communication application in Taiwan, and a map of the nation. The map will show users the nearby drug stores, along with the time of business and how many face masks are available. People can thus easily find drug store that have masks.

In order to prevent people from hoarding face masks, the government restricted the amount people could buy. For example, adults could only buy nine face masks every two weeks, while children could only buy ten face masks. When someone was buying face masks, the drug store could easily tell the time a prior purchased had been made.

To reduce the time that people had to wait in line to buy face masks, the government cooperated with the four biggest convenience stores 7-11, Family Mart, OK, and Hi-life, in order to allow people to reserve face masks with an interactive kiosk.

When using the machine, you see a

button showing “anti-epidemic



Menu used when reserving masks at a convenience store

battle” (防疫大作戰). Simply tap it, and choose “reserve face masks” (口罩預約) button. Then insert a health ID card and input your phone number. You receive a reservation paper, and pay. Finally, wait for a few days and go back to the same store, and you receive your reserved face masks.

Technology like this has made the use of face masks easier during the COVID pandemic, and is a convenient method provided by the government of Taiwan.

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