

# Ron Bauer Discusses Why Safely Developing a Vaccine is a Lengthy Process

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There is an

unprecedented global effort being undertaken to develop a vaccine for the novel coronavirus COVID-19, which has forced billions of people around the world into partial or full lockdowns to slow the virus' spread.

## Developing a Vaccine for COVID-19

There are at least 70 different vaccines for COVID-19 currently in various stages of early development or testing. Despite that, we could still be 12 to 18 months away from an approved vaccine, says Ron Bauer, a venture capitalist and entrepreneur who has worked with various top scientists and academic institutions to help launch multiple promising early-stage life sciences companies.

Needless to say, that is not exactly the news most people want to hear. While some countries are beginning to explore ways to lift some of their lockdown restrictions as cases plateau or begin to decline, there is seemingly only one surefire way for our lives to return to some semblance of normalcy and that is through the protection and herd immunity that can only be conferred through a vaccine.



It is understandable then why the masses are questioning just why vaccines take so long to develop, even with such a concentrated global effort to develop one. The short answer is that science cannot be rushed and there are lengthy safety protocols and procedures in place for a very good reason.

## How Vaccines Work

The purpose of a vaccine is to safely expose patients to a portion of the virus in question so that they can develop the antibodies needed to protect themselves from being infected by it. To do this, researchers isolate different antigens or proteins from the surface of a virus that could be used to try and trigger an immune response in humans.

The molecular structure of one such protein to potentially target was released by researchers back in February, a key "spike" protein that Ron Bauer says the COVID-19 virus uses to essentially break into and infect human cells. If the shape of that protein could be altered or covered up via a vaccine, it could prevent the virus from being able to invade our cells.

However, this overall process is complicated by multiple factors, one of the most prominent being that viruses are constantly mutating. According to scientists from China's Zhejiang University, COVID-19 has already mutated into over 30 different strains, all of which a vaccine must be able to successfully work against for it to be viable.

Once a protein or antigen has been pinpointed, animal testing can begin, which presents several additional challenges. For the results to have any applicability to humans, the animal must respond to the virus in the same way a human does. Then of course, the vaccine must improve the condition, which can't be taken for granted in the slightest, as the cure can actually be worse than the disease.

Ron Bauer notes that during the animal testing of a vaccine for the SARS coronavirus, it made the virus stronger, leading to the vaccinated mice dying at elevated rates compared to the unvaccinated control group.



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All of that animal testing takes long stretches of time, as vaccines must be given time to take hold, and then the virus likewise being given time so as to judge the vaccine's effectiveness and any potential side effects. The same process must be observed in the subsequent human testing, which goes through multiple phases and testing of different doses.

Once a vaccine has been successfully developed, there is still the production process hurdle to overcome, although Bill Gates may have those concerns largely covered, spending billions of dollars to prep multiple factories for vaccine production once a suitable candidate is ready for the stir-crazy masses.

Nonetheless, the World Health Organization believes we are still at least 12 months away from a vaccine and that the worst of COVID-19 is yet to come.

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