



## A Change Of Heart On COVID-19 Vaccination

(NAPS)—Stephanie Bramlett of Winder, Georgia, is one of many in the Southeast region who has experienced the effects of COVID-19 firsthand. Earlier this year, when the entrepreneur and mother of three was told she could get vaccinated, she was hesitant. She eats well, exercises regularly and never gets sick with the flu, so she assumed she'd be fine even if she was exposed to the virus. "I didn't want to be first," Bramlett said. "It felt too new."

Then her son attended church camp, and, unknowingly, brought the virus home. Bramlett woke up one morning with a throbbing headache, 103-degree fever and fatigue. She also discovered she had lost her sense of smell and taste, tell-tale symptoms of the coronavirus. Eleven days later, she couldn't get out of bed. Her head was hurting so badly that her husband took her to the hospital where they checked her for a brain bleed.

"I was terrified because I had never had head pain like this before," said Bramlett. She was diagnosed with inflammation of her brain vessels and myocarditis, a heart condition that made her heart feel like she was constantly running on a treadmill. Her body swelled as her kidney functions failed. Her recovery ultimately took 72 days.

"It was really, really scary and I don't wish that on anybody," Bramlett says of the experience.

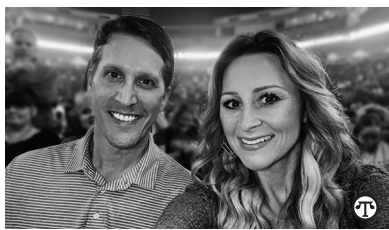
While Bramlett was ill, she asked her doctor if she could get vaccinated, but her medical team advised that she had to wait until she was feeling better. The moment she was cleared, Bramlett went right to the drug store for her vaccine.

"The hardest part was that people were dying all around me the entire time I was sick—healthy people, young people," Bramlett reflects. "I just felt so stupid. Here's this vaccine available and I just assumed that it wouldn't happen to me."

In fact, COVID-19 remains a serious threat across the U.S. as we head into the pandemic's second winter. The Delta variant, which now makes up virtually all cases in the country, spreads more easily than the common cold and has led to a dramatic increase in hospitalizations nationwide. This rise in serious cases and deaths was most pronounced in the Southern U.S., where vaccination rates are lower.

### What The CDC Says

According to the Centers For Dis-



**Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can greatly reduce your risk of death from that disease.**

ease Control and Prevention, people who have not yet been vaccinated are 29 times more likely to be hospitalized and 11 times more likely to die from COVID-19 complications, compared to those who have already received their vaccine.

Other CDC data reveals people ages 18 to 49 are the largest demographic hospitalized for COVID-19 as of September 25. Studies also show that even for individuals who have a mild case of COVID-19 and avoid hospitalization, they remain at risk of post-COVID symptoms, often called long COVID, that may last for weeks, months or longer. Symptoms of long COVID appear to affect as many as one in three people infected with the virus.

Bramlett now shares her experience with her friends and family to encourage them to consider being vaccinated. She urges everyone to talk to their doctor and learn about how they can keep themselves healthy and safe, so they can be present for their own children and families. To those still hesitant, Stephanie Bramlett says: "I understand. I understand that people are scared. I respect whatever decision you make or how you feel about the COVID-19 vaccine, but I would encourage people to do what they have to do to find the truth and do what you need to do to keep yourself healthy and safe."

### Learn More

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, widely available and free to everyone in the U.S. age twelve and older. Additionally, the FDA has formally approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. for those sixteen and older.

If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, talk to a doctor or pharmacist, and visit [www.GetVaccineAnswers.org](http://www.GetVaccineAnswers.org) for the latest information.