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## 'Super immunity' against Corona

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NEW research has found fully vaccinated people who catch Covid end up with “super immunity” and 10 times more antibodies than those who aren’t infected.

However, experts from Oregon Health and Science University say the same is also true for people who get infected before getting two jabs.

The scientists took blood samples from 104 university employees who were doublejabbed with Pfizer.

Volunteers were divided into three groups based on their previous infection status. Forty-two participants had never tested positive.

All of the others had either caught the coronavirus before being vaccinated, or were infected after getting their two jabs.

The experts then exposed their blood to three Covid variants: Alpha, Beta and Delta.

They found both of the groups with “hybrid immunity” generated greater levels of immunity compared with the group that was vaccinated with no infection.

Their antibodies were 10 times more potent than proteins made by participants who managed to dodge Covid completely.

And despite the study being completed before the emergence of Omicron, the scientists expect that the immune response to the new variant will be similar.

“It makes no difference whether you get infected and then vaccinated, or if you get vaccinated and then a breakthrough infection,” author Dr Fikadu Tafesse said.

“In either case, you will get a really, really robust immune response – amazingly high.”

Dr Tafesse said the high levels of protection among those with hybrid immunity could see the virus become a “mostly mild” infection and bring about the end of the pandemic.

“The likelihood of getting breakthrough infections is high because there is so much virus around us right now,” he said.

“But we position ourselves better by getting vaccinated. And if the virus comes, we’ll get a milder case and end up with this super immunity.”

However, researchers warned that unvaccinated people are likely to catch Covid multiple times and their immune response is “much more variable”.

“Immunity from natural infection alone is variable. Some people produce a strong response and others do not,” Dr Marcel Curlin, study author and infectious disease expert, said.

“But vaccination combined with immunity from infection almost always provides very strong responses.”