



# COVID Vaccine Talking Points

*The evidence-based talking points below are provided by HHS to help increase vaccine confidence while reinforcing basic prevention measures.*

## KEY FACTS ON COVID-19

- **COVID-19 is dangerous.** People ages 18 and older who are unvaccinated are nearly 8 times more likely to die if they get COVID than those who are vaccinated and boosted.
- **Updated vaccines are available.** Over time, your vaccine's effectiveness at protecting you from COVID could wane. An updated vaccine can boost protection against the worst outcomes from COVID, including severe illness, hospitalization, or death.
- **COVID vaccines help reduce the spread of COVID in your community.** Reducing the spread can help protect the people who are most vulnerable.
- **Vaccination reduces the risk of Long COVID.** People who get COVID are less likely to get Long COVID if they are vaccinated. Long COVID leaves people with symptoms such as fatigue, pain, and memory problems that can last for months, and the best way to prevent it is to stay up to date on COVID vaccines.
- **Vaccines are widely available and free.** Vaccines are available at no cost to anyone age 6 months or older living in the United States, no matter their immigration or health insurance status.
- **Talk with your health care provider about vaccination.** Getting vaccinated is a decision to discuss with a health care provider you trust. This can include a doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- **The American Medical Association** reports 96% of doctors have been vaccinated against COVID.

## GENERAL VACCINATION

### Preventive measures still matter.

- More than three-quarters of American adults and two-thirds of all Americans have been vaccinated against COVID. That's more than 230 million Americans who have protection from serious illness, hospitalization, and death that vaccines offer.
- It is possible for vaccinated people to get COVID but people who are up to date on their vaccines have strong protection against severe illness and death.
- Masks can add another layer of protection for everyone. People in communities where COVID is spreading should wear a mask in indoor public spaces.
- If you are at high risk for getting seriously sick from COVID or live with someone who is at high risk, you may choose to wear a mask in more situations.
- If you wear a mask, choose one that fits well and that you can wear consistently.



## **The official federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency is over, but vaccination is still important.**

- On May 11, the federal government ended its COVID-19 Public Health Emergency which was first declared back in January 2020.
- The federal government continues to treat COVID as a public health priority.
- COVID hasn't gone away—people are still getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying from COVID.
- Most importantly, COVID vaccines and treatment continue to be free for everyone.

## **COVID vaccines are available to anyone age 6 months or older.**

- Every person in the country age 6 months or older—in every community, in every corner of America—is eligible to get vaccinated.
- Vaccines are free and available, regardless of health insurance or immigration status. And getting vaccinated has never been easier or more convenient.
- Vaccines help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID.
- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or text your ZIP code to 438829 to find places nearby to get a vaccine.

## **Updated COVID vaccines protect against severe illness.**

- Updated mRNA COVID vaccines offer protection against two strains of the COVID virus. These vaccines may be updated in the future, like flu shots are, if new strains emerge.
- Most people who have never been vaccinated against COVID can protect themselves against severe illness with one dose of an mRNA vaccine. Some people will need an additional dose because their age or health puts them at high risk for COVID complications.
  - Everyone who has not yet gotten their first COVID vaccine will now get the updated formula as their primary vaccine.
- If you're already vaccinated but don't yet have an updated vaccine, now's the time to get one, especially if you are at higher risk for severe COVID illness, like older adults and people with a chronic medical condition.
  - Adults 65 and older are also eligible for a second dose of the updated vaccine 4 months after their last dose. Also, people with compromised immune systems can get another updated vaccine dose 2 months after their first, and even more if advised by their doctor.
- Also, children 6 months and older can now get an updated vaccine. Talk to your child's pediatrician about when to schedule an appointment.
- If you're vaccinated and have had COVID, but haven't gotten an updated vaccine yet, you can get yours 3 months after your COVID infection.
- An updated vaccine gives you added protection from severe COVID-related illness, hospitalization, and death and helps protection that has waned over time.
  - Recent studies show that an updated vaccine cuts the risk of needing care for COVID in an emergency department, urgent care clinic, or hospital by half or more for most people.

- Even if you've had COVID, a free updated vaccine can boost your immune system to reduce your risk of getting it again.

### There are risks to getting immunity from COVID.

- Getting COVID can damage your heart and lungs, and a COVID infection may make you sick enough to miss work or need hospital care.
- Having a previous COVID infection does not necessarily protect you from getting another one – or from getting severely ill if you get infected again.
- People who get COVID more than once have higher risks for hospitalization, death, and Long COVID symptoms.
- Anyone, no matter their age or health status, who gets COVID can have symptoms for months after they recover from the initial illness, even if they had a very mild case.
- Studies show that 1 out of every 5 adult COVID survivors reports lingering symptoms – often called Long COVID.
  - Common symptoms of Long COVID include fatigue, pain, shortness of breath, difficulty thinking or concentrating, fast or irregular heartbeat, loss of taste and smell, memory problems, mood changes, and hair loss.
  - COVID can damage organs, including the lungs, heart, and brain, and can lead to an increased risk of long-term health problems such as strokes or seizures.
  - People who have had COVID are at higher risk for heart disease no matter what other risk factors they have.

### COVID vaccines restore your protection.

- Vaccination reduces the risk of getting Long COVID.
  - Among people who get COVID, those who are vaccinated are less likely to develop Long COVID than those who are unvaccinated.
- Serious vaccine side effects are rare. Most side effects are mild and short-lived.
  - Hundreds of millions of people have gotten COVID vaccines without experiencing serious, long-term health effects from the vaccines.

### We Can Do This.

- Want more information about the benefits of getting vaccinated?
  - **Talk to a doctor.** A health care provider is a great person to answer any questions you may have about the COVID-19 vaccines.
  - **Get answers** by visiting [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for more information.
  - **Help the people you care about** find vaccines at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

## VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN

### Vaccines are available for children ages 6 months and older.

- More than 16 million children under age 18 in the U.S. have gotten COVID.
- You can't predict how COVID will affect kids if they get it. They might be one of the lucky ones and just have the sniffles, but the risk for something much worse is very real.
- Even children who don't need hospital care sometimes have symptoms that can last for months.
- Throughout the pandemic, kids under 5 have been more likely than older kids to be hospitalized with COVID.
- Fortunately, children ages 6 months and older can get the protection of a COVID vaccine.
- To protect your newborn under 6 months from COVID, get a free COVID vaccine during your pregnancy. Studies show that babies whose mothers were vaccinated against COVID during pregnancy were less likely to get COVID in their first six months of life.

### Vaccines for children have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

- Clinical trials for vaccines for children ages 6 months to 11 years were designed to look at safety and to find the best dose. The vaccines protect children without causing serious safety concerns.
- Vaccines for children under 12 are given in lower/smaller doses tailored just for them.
- CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that children, including children who have already had COVID, get a COVID vaccine.

## KEY FACTS ON TREATMENT

### Treatments for COVID are available and work well against the worst outcomes.

- Treating COVID early with medicine prescribed by a doctor can help keep you out of the hospital and could save your life.
- Many health care locations like pharmacies and urgent care centers can now test and treat COVID during the same visit.
- If you have COVID symptoms, it's important to get tested right away so you can get treatment within days to help prevent severe illness.
- If you are over the age of 50 or have a medical condition, you may be at severe risk from a COVID infection. If you are at higher risk, talk to a doctor as soon as your symptoms occur to decrease your chances of severe infection and death.