



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.** The virus can cause severe disease, hospitalization, or death. Vaccines and boosters offer the best protection from the worst outcomes from COVID.
- **Unvaccinated adults are nearly 5 times** more likely to be hospitalized with COVID as those who have been vaccinated and boosted.
- **Vaccination reduces the risk of long COVID**, which leaves people with fatigue, pain, and memory problems that can last for months. The best way to prevent long COVID is by not getting COVID in the first place.
- **Vaccination lowers the risk of variants emerging.** The more unvaccinated people there are, the greater the chance COVID has to spread and mutate into more contagious variants that cause severe disease.
- **Vaccines are widely available and free.** Vaccines are available at no cost to everyone age 6 months or older living in the United States, no matter your immigration or health insurance status.
- **Getting vaccinated** is a decision to discuss with a doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider you trust.
- **The American Medical Association** reports that 96% of doctors have gotten a shot themselves.

GENERAL VACCINATION

Preventive measures still matter.

- Three-quarters of American adults and two-thirds of all Americans have been vaccinated. That's more than 221 million Americans who are protected from serious illness, hospitalization, and death.
- It is possible for vaccinated people to get COVID-19; but people who are vaccinated and boosted 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 is comfortable and fits well.
- The Omicron variant and its BA.2 subvariant both spread more easily than other COVID variants. Since February 2022, almost all cases of COVID in the U.S. have been caused by Omicron or one of its subvariants.
 - BA.2 is the most common cause of COVID cases in the United States.
- Vaccines and boosters are still effective at preventing the worst outcomes from COVID, even from Omicron and its BA.2 subvariant.
- If you are not vaccinated, no matter your age, you are at risk of getting sick, and even dying.

COVID-19 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 a shot has never been easier or more convenient.
- Vaccines help prevent severe illness and death from COVID.
- The risks from COVID-19 far outweigh any risks from side effects of the vaccine.
- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or text your ZIP code to 438829 to find places nearby.

Vaccines and booster shots offer protection against COVID-19 variants.

- The good news is we have powerful tools for protection from variants: Vaccines.
 - People who are unvaccinated are nearly 2 times more likely to get COVID than people who are vaccinated and boosted.
 - Vaccines and boosters are the best protection against severe COVID illness and death. Masks can add an extra layer of protection.
 - Unvaccinated people are at a higher risk from currently circulating variants. They have a higher chance of getting severely ill and even dying.
- COVID vaccines and boosters still protect people from the worst outcomes of COVID and also help reduce the spread of COVID in communities, further reducing risks for our most vulnerable populations.
- We know the path to controlling the virus and limiting variants: get vaccinated, get boosted, and take your children to get vaccinated and boosted.

Getting COVID-19 can have serious long-lasting health effects, while long-term impacts from vaccines are unlikely.

- Anyone, no matter their age or health status, who gets COVID-19 can have symptoms for months after they recover, even if they had a very mild case. Some studies show that about 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.
 - Studies have found that, regardless of other risk factors, people who have had COVID are at higher risk for heart disease, including people who were not hospitalized for COVID.
- COVID and long COVID are very unpredictable.
- Millions of people have received COVID vaccines without experiencing serious, long-term health effects from the vaccines.
- Vaccination reduces the risk of getting long COVID by preventing COVID in the first place.
- The risks from COVID far outweigh any risks from side effects of the vaccine.

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 for more information.
 - **Help the people you care about** find vaccines at vaccines.gov.

VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN

Vaccines for children ages 6 months to 11 years have been tested in children.

- More than 13 million children under age 18 in the U.S. have gotten COVID-19.
- COVID has infected 1 child in 6 since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Vaccines protect against severe COVID cases in young people and are the most important tool we have to prevent childhood deaths and keep kids safer.
- Clinical trials for vaccines for children ages 6 months to 11 years were designed to look at safety and to find the best dose. Vaccines for children ages 6 months to 5 years, and vaccines and boosters for children 5 to 11, are given in smaller doses tailored just for them.
- COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations among children in the U.S. rose to record levels with the spread of the Omicron variant.
- Even if they don't experience severe symptoms right away, children can face long-term health effects from COVID-19.
- Children are 4 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19 if they live in a state with low vaccination rates compared to states with high vaccination rates.

BOOSTERS

Everyone 5 or older who is vaccinated should get boosted.

- Being up to date on COVID-19 vaccines helps prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
- If you are age 5 years or older and vaccinated, boosters can provide continued protection and give you the best defense possible against COVID, including from variants that might be more contagious or cause more severe disease.
- If you're age 65 or older and vaccinated, boosters can more than double your protection against being hospitalized from COVID.
- COVID boosters give continued protection that allows people to gather, travel, go to concerts, watch sporting events, and celebrate with others without having to worry about getting seriously ill, as well as peace of mind in helping the community stay safe.
- Everyone age 5 or older who is vaccinated should get boosted. To be up to date on vaccinations:
 - Get a booster at least 5 months after your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
 - Adults who are 50 years old or older should get a second booster shot four months after their last shot.
 - Vaccinated adults 18 or older may choose any authorized vaccine as a booster, regardless of the type or brand of vaccine received before.
 - If you received the Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccine or vaccine and booster, you should get a booster or second booster shot.
 - CDC recommends vaccinated people receive either the Pfizer or Moderna booster.
 - Only the Pfizer booster is available for those ages 5 to 17 who are vaccinated.

- Like the initial doses of COVID-19 vaccines, boosters are free to everyone living in the U.S. They are readily available both by appointment and walk-in visits, and no insurance or identification is required to receive your booster shot.