



# 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 infection can cause severe illness, hospitalization, or death. Vaccines offer the best protection from the worst outcomes from COVID.
- **Updated vaccines target old and new strains.** The updated vaccines provide broad protection against COVID and the strongest protection available against the current Omicron strains.
- **Vaccination reduces the emergence of variants.** The more unvaccinated people there are, the greater the chance COVID has to spread and mutate into variants that spread more easily or cause more severe disease. Vaccination helps protect individuals and communities.
- **Vaccination reduces the risk of long COVID.** 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 avoid getting COVID in the first place.
- **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.

- Three-quarters of American adults and two-thirds of all Americans have been vaccinated. That's more than 225 million Americans who have protection from serious illness, hospitalization, and death that vaccines offer.
- It is possible for vaccinated people to get COVID-19; but people who are up to date on their COVID 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 Omicron variants spread more easily than other COVID strains.
- Updated vaccines provide the strongest available protection from the Omicron strains of the COVID virus.
- If you are not vaccinated, 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 vaccinated has never been easier or more convenient.
- Vaccines help prevent severe illness and death from COVID.
- The risks from COVID far outweigh any risks from side effects of the vaccines.
- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or text your ZIP code to 438829 to find places nearby to get a vaccine.

### **Updated vaccines offer protection against the Omicron variant.**

- We have powerful tools for protection from variants: Vaccines.
  - Updated vaccines provide broad protection against COVID and the strongest protection available against the current Omicron strains.
  - Unvaccinated people are at a higher risk from currently circulating variants. They have a higher chance of getting severely ill and even dying.
  - Updated vaccines are now available for anyone age 12 or older who received their last vaccine dose at least two months ago. These updated vaccines provide the strongest protection available against the current Omicron strain.
- Updated COVID vaccines 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 an updated vaccine when eligible, and make sure children are up to date on their COVID vaccines.

### **Three vaccines are available for the primary series for anyone age 12 or older.**

- Vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax are available for the primary series.
- The Novavax vaccine is the newest primary series vaccine for fighting COVID. It is based on familiar vaccine technology.
  - The Novavax vaccine is a protein vaccine, which packages harmless proteins of the COVID-19 virus with another ingredient that stimulates the immune system.
  - Protein vaccines have been used for more than 30 years in the United States, beginning with the first licensed hepatitis B vaccine.
- CDC believes Novavax may be a good option for unvaccinated people 12 and older who are concerned about the mRNA technology used in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which have been thoroughly tested and safely used for 18 months.

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

- COVID and long COVID are very unpredictable.
- Anyone, no matter their age or health status, who gets COVID can have symptoms for months after they recover, even if they had a very mild case.
- Some 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.
  - 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.
- Vaccination reduces the risk of getting long COVID by preventing COVID in the first place. Getting vaccinated is a safer way to build protection than getting sick with COVID.
- Millions of people have gotten COVID vaccines without experiencing serious, long-term health effects from the vaccines.
- The risks from COVID far outweigh any risks from side effects of 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 now available for children ages 6 months and older.

- 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.
- More than 15 million children under age 18 in the U.S. have gotten COVID.
- This year, kids under 5 have been more likely than older kids to be hospitalized with COVID. Even children who don't need hospital care sometimes have symptoms that can last for months.
- Fortunately, children ages 6 months through 17 years can now get the protection of a COVID vaccine.
- The best way to protect your child is with a safe and effective COVID vaccine that has been tested in children their age. COVID vaccines for children are now available at no cost.

## **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 ages 6 months to 5 years, and vaccines and boosters for children 5 to 11, 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.