

A campaign to increase vaccine confidence while reinforcing basic prevention measures



User Guide for Pharmacists Toolkit

This material is for pharmacists and organizations that communicate directly with pharmacists.

Content last reviewed: May 24, 2021

Your Role as a Pharmacist Advocate

As a trusted voice to pharmacists, you are in an important position to share crucial COVID-19 information and increase vaccine confidence. Pharmacists are on the front lines of this pandemic and are at high risk of exposure. They interact with patients who may need additional information to make informed decisions about the vaccines and preventive measures. We want you to use your voice and share these materials with your pharmacist networks so pharmacists can educate themselves and their patients.

You've built a rapport, so your colleagues trust you and understand that you support their well-being.

Because of your commitment to your pharmacy profession, you know how to reach and inspire them.

You can increase their confidence in the vaccine by sharing clear, complete, and accurate messages about COVID-19 vaccines.



Purpose and Goal

The purpose of this toolkit is to highlight some of the very useful communication resources from the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The goal is to explain how Pharmacist leaders like you can use this toolkit to build vaccine confidence among your staff, colleagues, patients, and others in your community.

Vaccination is an important tool to help your community remain safe from COVID-19. Until you're fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your final dose), wearing a mask inside public places, keeping 6 feet apart from people who don't live with you and who may not be vaccinated, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces, and washing your hands will also help slow the spread of infection.



Tools and Resources

This toolkit features a combination of already existing materials from the [CDC](#) as well as newly developed and culturally tailored materials developed by the [HHS COVID-19 public education campaign](#). Here you will find the following:

- Fact sheets
- FAQs
- Posters
- Videos
- Infographics
- Talking points
- Social media messaging

We'll regularly update this toolkit, so please check back for new materials.



Fact Sheets

Your team may have questions about the vaccines and how to stay safe as a frontline worker. Use the fact sheets in this toolkit to help them learn about the vaccines and safety guidelines.

Suggested Use:

- Post them on your website.
- Mail them along with your direct mailings.
- Post them to an information center in your office if you have one.

Answering Your Questions About the New COVID-19 Vaccines



Do clinical trial results show whether vaccines are effective?
The clinical trials provide data and information about how well a vaccine prevents an infectious disease and about how safe it is. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) evaluates this data, along with information from the manufacturers, to assess the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine. FDA then decides whether to approve a vaccine or authorize it for emergency use in the United States.

After a vaccine is either approved or authorized for emergency use by FDA, more assessments are done before a vaccine is recommended for public use. The goal of these assessments is to understand more about the protection a vaccine provides under real-world conditions, outside of clinical trials.

After COVID-19 vaccines are approved or authorized for emergency use by FDA and recommended for public use, CDC will further assess their effectiveness. These real-world assessments will compare groups of people who do and don't get vaccinated and people who do and don't get COVID-19 to find out how well COVID-19 vaccines are working to protect people.

Why would the effectiveness of vaccines be different after the clinical trials?
Many factors can affect a vaccine's effectiveness in real-world situations. These factors can include things such as how a vaccine is transported and stored or even how patients are vaccinated. Vaccine effectiveness can also be affected by differences in the underlying medical conditions of people vaccinated as compared to those vaccinated in the clinical trials.

Assessments of vaccine effectiveness can also provide important information about how well a vaccine is working in groups of people who were not included or were not well represented in clinical trials.

How will experts evaluate the COVID-19 vaccines in real-world conditions?
Experts are working on many types of real-world studies to determine vaccine effectiveness, and each uses a different method.

- **Case-control studies** will include cases (people who have the virus that causes COVID-19) and controls (people who do not have the virus that causes COVID-19). People who agree to participate in a case-control study will provide information on whether they received a COVID-19 vaccine or not. Experts will look to see if the cases were less likely to have received the vaccine than controls, which would show that the vaccine is working.
- **A test-negative design study** will enroll people who are seeking medical care for symptoms that could be due to COVID-19. In this special type of case-control study, experts will compare the COVID-19 vaccination status of those who test positive (meaning they have COVID-19) to those who test negative (meaning they do not have COVID-19).

A new approach to vaccines
mRNA vaccines take advantage of the process that cells use to make proteins in order to trigger an immune response and build immunity to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. In contrast, most vaccines use weakened or inactivated viruses or components of the disease-causing pathogen to stimulate the body's immune response to create antibodies.

Mechanism for Action
mRNA vaccines have strands of messenger RNA inside a special coating that protects the mRNA from enzymes in the body that would otherwise break it down. The coating also helps the mRNA enter the muscle cells near the vaccination site.

mRNA vaccines tell our cells to make a piece of the "spike protein" that's found on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Since only part of the protein is made, it does not harm the vaccine recipient. But if an antibody is thus stimulated the immune system to make antibodies.

You and your patients may have questions about how mRNA vaccines work and how safe they are.

- Like all vaccines, these COVID-19 mRNA vaccines were tested thoroughly for safety before being authorized for use in the United States.
- mRNA technology is new but not unknown. It has been studied for decades.
- mRNA vaccines do not contain live viruses and carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.
- mRNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell and does not affect or interact with a person's DNA.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines will continue to be rigorously evaluated for safety
These COVID-19 mRNA vaccines went through the same rigorous safety assessment as all vaccines do before the Food and Drug Administration authorizes them for use in the United States. This included large clinical trials and data reviews by a safety monitoring board.

Other patients are concerned about live vaccines. mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines and do not use an infectious element, so they carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.

mRNA vaccines are new, but not unknown
Currently, there are no licensed mRNA vaccines in the United States. However, researchers have been studying them for decades.

After the piece of the spike protein is made, the cell breaks down the mRNA strand and disposes of it using enzymes in the cell. As stated above, the mRNA strand never enters the cell nucleus or affects the vaccine recipient's genetic material. Knowing this helps you respond to misinformation about how mRNA vaccines alter or modify someone's genetic makeup.

Once displayed on the cell surface, the protein or antigen causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus spike proteins, which means the immune system is ready to protect against future infection.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines will continue to be rigorously evaluated for safety
These COVID-19 mRNA vaccines went through the same rigorous safety assessment as all vaccines do before the Food and Drug Administration authorizes them for use in the United States. This included large clinical trials and data reviews by a safety monitoring board.

Other patients are concerned about live vaccines. mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines and do not use an infectious element, so they carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.

mRNA vaccines are new, but not unknown
Currently, there are no licensed mRNA vaccines in the United States. However, researchers have been studying them for decades.

Answering Your Questions About the New COVID-19 Vaccines

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

Click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines) to download.

Learn About the New mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines



The first two COVID-19 vaccines expected to receive authorization for use in the United States are what is known as messenger RNA vaccines—also called “mRNA” vaccines.

You and your patients may have questions about how mRNA vaccines work and how safe they are.

- Like all vaccines, these COVID-19 mRNA vaccines were tested thoroughly for safety before being authorized for use in the United States.
- mRNA technology is new but not unknown. It has been studied for decades.
- mRNA vaccines do not contain live viruses and carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.
- mRNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell and does not affect or interact with a person's DNA.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines will continue to be rigorously evaluated for safety
These COVID-19 mRNA vaccines went through the same rigorous safety assessment as all vaccines do before the Food and Drug Administration authorizes them for use in the United States. This included large clinical trials and data reviews by a safety monitoring board.

Other patients are concerned about live vaccines. mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines and do not use an infectious element, so they carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.

mRNA vaccines are new, but not unknown
Currently, there are no licensed mRNA vaccines in the United States. However, researchers have been studying them for decades.

After the piece of the spike protein is made, the cell breaks down the mRNA strand and disposes of it using enzymes in the cell. As stated above, the mRNA strand never enters the cell nucleus or affects the vaccine recipient's genetic material. Knowing this helps you respond to misinformation about how mRNA vaccines alter or modify someone's genetic makeup.

Once displayed on the cell surface, the protein or antigen causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus spike proteins, which means the immune system is ready to protect against future infection.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines will continue to be rigorously evaluated for safety
These COVID-19 mRNA vaccines went through the same rigorous safety assessment as all vaccines do before the Food and Drug Administration authorizes them for use in the United States. This included large clinical trials and data reviews by a safety monitoring board.

Other patients are concerned about live vaccines. mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines and do not use an infectious element, so they carry no risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.

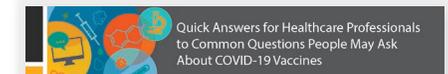
mRNA vaccines are new, but not unknown
Currently, there are no licensed mRNA vaccines in the United States. However, researchers have been studying them for decades.

Learn About the New mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

Click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines) to download.

Quick Answers for Health Care Professionals to Common Questions People May Ask About COVID-19 Vaccines



When talking to your patients about COVID-19 vaccines, make a strong, effective recommendation and allow time for them to ask questions. Hearing your answers may help them feel more confident about getting vaccinated.

- 1. Should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?**
I strongly recommend you get vaccinated. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness. By getting vaccinated, you can also help protect people around you.
- 2. Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**
No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines recently authorized for use or in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.
- 3. If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?**
Yes. CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can catch it more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last.
- 4. Can my child get vaccinated for COVID-19?**
No. More studies need to be conducted before COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for children younger than age 16.
- 5. Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?**
Yes. COVID-19 vaccines is especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- 6. Is it better to get natural immunity to COVID-19 rather than immunity from a vaccine?**
No. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection lasts. Vaccination is the best protection, and it's safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have debilitating symptoms that persist for months.

Quick Answers for Healthcare Professionals to Common Questions People May Ask About COVID-19 Vaccines

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

Click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines) to download.

Fact Sheets

Top 20 Frequently Asked Questions

Use this fact sheet for both in-house training of pharmacists and staff as well as to provide ready-made answers for common questions about the vaccines.

WE CAN DO THIS

Replace box with your organization's logo

Top 20 Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19

SAFETY IS THE TOP PRIORITY

The FDA and CDC have the highest standards when it comes to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Their process includes the following procedures:

- ✓ Scientists must first test vaccines extensively in medical studies to ensure they are safe and effective.
- ✓ Before the FDA authorizes a vaccine for use among the public, it ensures its safety by independently:
 - Reviewing the data from the medical studies, and
 - Inspecting the manufacturing facilities.
- ✓ Even after a vaccine has been authorized, the FDA and CDC closely monitor vaccine administration to identify even rare side effects or reactions.
- ✓ The FDA and CDC closely review any reports of side effects or reactions and share these facts with the public.

The extremely rare cases of blood clotting following Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine—just a small number of cases out of millions of vaccinations—show that the FDA and CDC's vaccine safety monitoring systems work and catch even the rarest of reactions.

A thorough investigation has confirmed that Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine is safe and effective.

And doctors have been notified and trained to understand the signs to watch for and the proper course of treatment if blood clots occur.

Content last reviewed: May 7, 2021

Click [here](#) to download.

Managing COVID-19 Costs

This fact sheet answers pharmacist and patient questions about the actual costs of the COVID-19 vaccines and reimbursement strategies go comply with current policies.

WE CAN DO THIS

Replace box with your organization's logo

Managing COVID-19 Vaccination Costs

OVERVIEW

COVID-19 vaccines are being provided to all people in the United States at no cost to them.^{1,2} Select groups of retail pharmacies are now involved in this COVID-19 vaccine initiative as part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program.

The program is a public-private partnership of 21 national pharmacy partners and networks of independent pharmacies representing over 40,000 pharmacy locations nationwide.³

Those who qualify for the vaccine may contact a local pharmacy to receive their vaccinations. This program is meant to speed up efforts to vaccinate the population more quickly.⁴

And while this effort serves to expand opportunities for more people to get a COVID-19 vaccine more quickly, it does create some challenges for the pharmacies involved.

One of the key issues will be managing costs involved at the point of service.

COVID-19 Vaccines are Free to the Public

While no pharmacy can charge patients for the vaccinations, providers can be reimbursed for an administration fee for giving someone the shot.⁵ Vaccination providers can bill the publicly, public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, request reimbursement from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Provider Relief fund. This is to ensure that no patient, regardless of their insurance coverage, pays out of pocket costs to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.⁶

Many people continue to be confused about the cost of the vaccines. Any communication by retail pharmacies to notify individuals of available vaccines should include the message that the vaccines will be available AT NO COST TO THEM.

Reimbursement Guidance for Vaccine Providers

The following guidance explains how to apply for reimbursement of administration fees associated with delivering the COVID-19 vaccine.

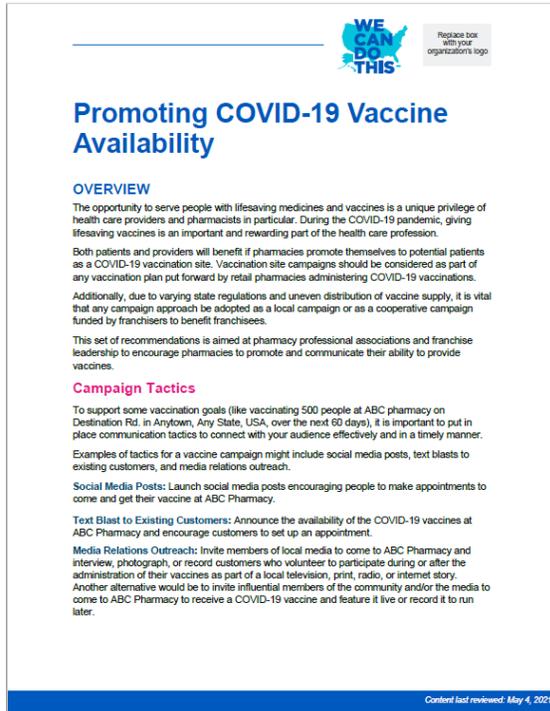
The COVID-19 vaccine doses are provided at no cost to providers or patients by the federal government, but providers are allowed to charge an administration fee. Receiving these administration fees requires providers to file for reimbursement.⁷

Click [here](#) to download.

Fact Sheets

Promoting COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

Use this fact sheet to learn how to encourage pharmacies to promote and communicate their ability to provide vaccines.



Promoting COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

OVERVIEW

The opportunity to serve people with lifesaving medicines and vaccines is a unique privilege of health care providers and pharmacists in particular. During the COVID-19 pandemic, giving lifesaving vaccines is an important and rewarding part of the health care profession.

Both patients and providers will benefit if pharmacies promote themselves to potential patients as a COVID-19 vaccination site. Vaccination site campaigns should be considered as part of any vaccination plan put forward by retail pharmacies administering COVID-19 vaccinations.

Additionally, due to varying state regulations and uneven distribution of vaccine supply, it is vital that any campaign approach be adopted as a local campaign or as a cooperative campaign funded by franchisers to benefit franchisees.

This set of recommendations is aimed at pharmacy professional associations and franchise leadership to encourage pharmacies to promote and communicate their ability to provide vaccines.

Campaign Tactics

To support some vaccination goals (like vaccinating 500 people at ABC pharmacy on Destination Rd. in Anytown, Any State, USA, over the next 60 days), it is important to put in place communication tactics to connect with your audience effectively and in a timely manner.

Examples of tactics for a vaccine campaign might include social media posts, text blasts to existing customers, and media relations outreach.

Social Media Posts: Launch social media posts encouraging people to make appointments to come and get their vaccine at ABC Pharmacy.

Text Blast to Existing Customers: Announce the availability of the COVID-19 vaccines at ABC Pharmacy and encourage customers to set up an appointment.

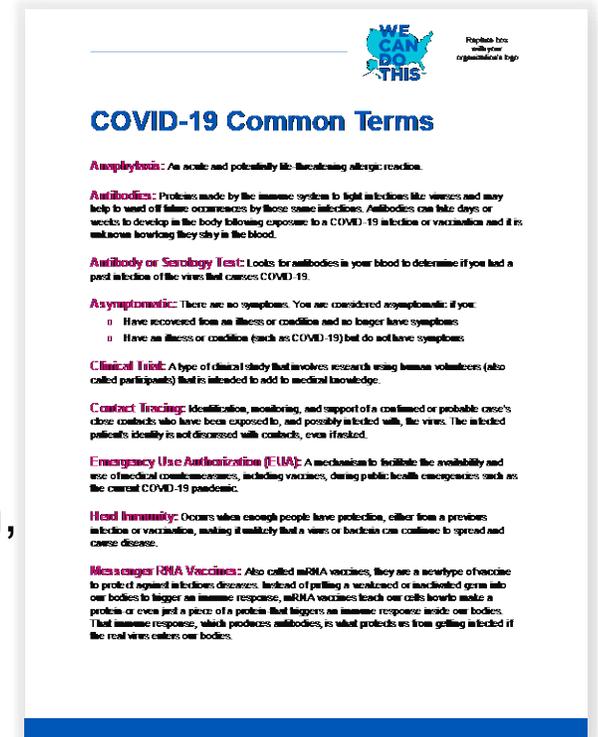
Media Relations Outreach: Invite members of local media to come to ABC Pharmacy and interview, photograph, or record customers who volunteer to participate during or after the administration of their vaccines as part of a local television, print, radio, or internet story. Another alternative would be to invite influential members of the community and/or the media to come to ABC Pharmacy to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and feature it live or record it to run later.

Content last reviewed: May 4, 2021

Click [here](#) to download.

COVID-19 Common Terms

Use this resource to inform staff of terminology surrounding COVID-19 prevention, infection, immunization, treatment, and recovery.



COVID-19 Common Terms

Anaphylaxis: An acute and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

Antibodies: Proteins made by the immune system to fight infections like viruses and may help to ward off future occurrences by those same infections. Antibodies can take days or weeks to develop in the body following exposure to a COVID-19 infection or vaccination and it is unknown how long they stay in the blood.

Antibody or Serology Test: Looks for antibodies in your blood to determine if you had a past infection of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Asymptomatic: There are no symptoms. You are considered asymptomatic if you:

- Have recovered from an illness or condition and no longer have symptoms
- Have an illness or condition (such as COVID-19) but do not have symptoms

Clinical Trial: A type of clinical study that involves research using human volunteers (also called participants) that is intended to add to medical knowledge.

Contact Tracing: Identification, monitoring, and support of a confirmed or probable case's close contacts who have been exposed to, and possibly infected with, the virus. The infected patient's identity is not discussed with contacts, even friends.

Emergency Use Authorization (EUA): A mechanism to facilitate the availability and use of medical countermeasures, including vaccines, during public health emergencies such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Herd Immunity: Occurs when enough people have protection, either from a previous infection or vaccination, making it unlikely that a virus or bacteria can continue to spread and cause disease.

Messenger (mRNA) Vaccines: Also called mRNA vaccines, they are a new type of vaccine to protect against infectious diseases. Instead of putting a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies to trigger an immune response, mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Content last reviewed: May 4, 2021

Click [here](#) to download.

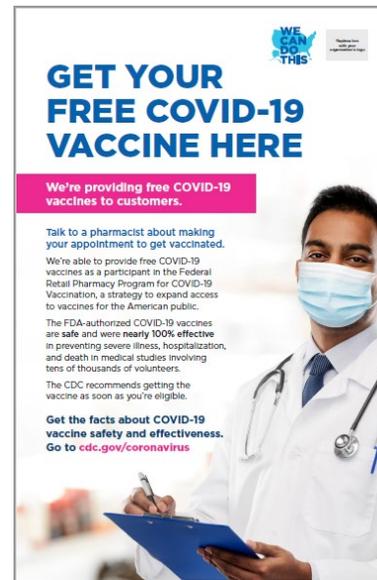
Posters

You can download, print, and hang these posters to foster conversation among pharmacists and make vaccination visible.

Suggested Use:

- Hang at vaccination sites.
- Hang in a staff lounge or breakroom.
- Hang in leadership offices.

Get Your Free COVID-19 Vaccine Here



Click [here](#) to download.

Getting "Back to Normal" Is Going to Take All of Our Tools



Click [here](#) to download.

Why Get Vaccinated?



Click [here](#) to download.

Videos

Watch and share these videos with your team to learn how COVID-19 vaccines must adhere to specific FDA guidelines for safety and efficacy, how the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) develops recommendations and advises CDC on the use of vaccines, and how to foster a culture of vaccination in a practice.

Suggested Use:

- Create links to these videos on your accounts.
- Post to your website.
- Ask your followers to share on their social media and community networks.

Tell Me More: Vaccine Safety | How Does the FDA Know That a New Vaccine is Safe?



Dr. Sandra Leal on a Culture of Vaccination in a Practice



How CDC is Making COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations

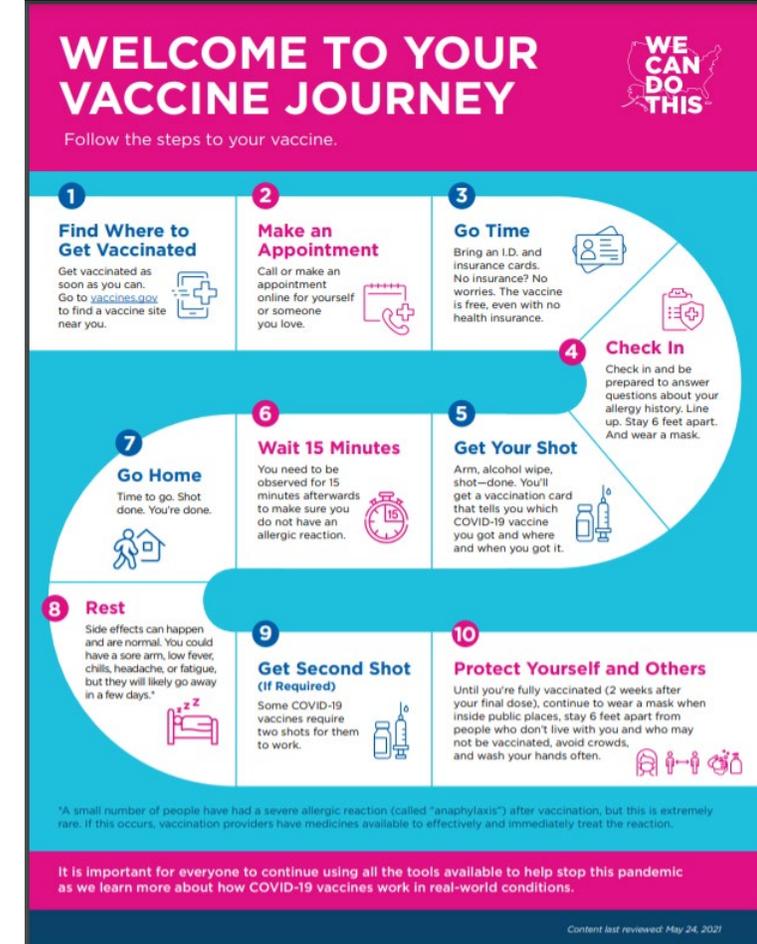


Infographic

Infographics are a great way to share important visual information and messages.

Suggested Use:

- Ask pharmacists to place in their clinics and facilities.
- Add to your newsletters.
- Create a call to action and encourage sharing on social media.



Click [here](#) to download.

Talking Points

Use these talking points in conversations with colleagues, staff, and patients. They include facts and messages on COVID-related topics, including vaccine safety, preventive measures, and the benefits of vaccination.

Suggested Use:

- Mail them along with your direct mailings to health care system and clinic leaders.
- Post them to an information center in your office if you have one.
- Have “live” sessions on social media where you use these points to steer the conversation.
- Host a webinar and use these points in your presentation.
- Use these points to create your own social media posts and content.



Replace box with your organization's logo

Talking Points for Pharmacists

Safety

- The vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Clinical trial participants were recruited to see how the vaccines offer protection for people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, including those with different medical conditions.
- I trust the vaccines are safe and effective because of the data. The FDA-authorized vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.
- The FDA carefully reviews all safety data from clinical trials and gives emergency use authorization (EUA) only when the expected benefits outweigh potential risks.
- FDA and CDC closely monitor vaccine safety after the public begins using a vaccine to watch for possible side effects. The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) allows anyone to submit a report, including parents, patients, and health care professionals. There's also the V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker which is a smartphone-based tool that sends text messages and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you've been vaccinated.
- To speed the process, COVID-19 vaccines went into production while they were still being tested for safety and effectiveness in clinical trials. This kept the vaccines safe but also made them available more quickly.

SAFETY IS THE TOP PRIORITY

The FDA and CDC have the highest standards when it comes to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Their process includes the following procedures:

- ✓ Scientists must first test vaccines extensively in medical studies to ensure they are safe and effective.
- ✓ Before the FDA authorizes a vaccine for use among the public, it ensures its safety by independently:
 - Reviewing the data from the medical studies, and
 - Inspecting the manufacturing facilities.
- ✓ Even after a vaccine has been authorized, the FDA and CDC closely monitor vaccine administration to identify even rare side effects or reactions.
- ✓ The FDA and CDC closely review any reports of side effects or reactions and share these facts with the public.

The extremely rare cases of blood clotting following Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine—just a small number of cases out of millions of vaccinations—show that the FDA and CDC's vaccine safety monitoring systems work and catch even the rarest of reactions.

A thorough investigation has confirmed that Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine is safe and effective.

And doctors have been notified and trained to understand the signs to watch for and the proper course of treatment if blood clots occur.

Content last reviewed: May 7, 2021

Click [here](#) to download.

Social Media Messaging

Social media is a great way to share information frequently and fast. These social media posts underscore the importance of the vaccines and the CDC prevention guidelines. This toolkit has a variety of topics and photos to share on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Suggested Use:

- Share these social media posts on your accounts.
- Ask questions under the post to encourage engagement.
- Ask your followers to share with their network.

Sample Post

Did you know you can't get the COVID-19 virus from a vaccine? None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID. Learn more at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) #WeCanDoThis

Facebook + Instagram



Twitter



Click [here](#) to download.

For More Information

In addition to the resources highlighted here, take a look at CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit](#), which has other materials such as fact sheets, posters, stickers, and social media examples for pharmacists to share.

The website is loaded with very useful information and the toolkit is intended to help you better understand the facts, feel confident getting vaccinated when it's your turn, and become a trusted messenger in your community.



**Thank you, pharmacists,
for being on the front lines
against COVID-19!**

