

Building confidence for the COVID-19 vaccine - especially for special and vulnerable populations like residents of public housing - is a critical component of effective public health, and a top priority for community health centers. Active listening, combined with validating existing hesitation or concerns, demonstrates an effort to meet individuals where they are and an opportunity to provide information. In your health center's effort to build vaccine confidence, consider the following approach:

“Are you considering the COVID-19 vaccine? Why/Why not? May I provide you with some information?”

“We understand some people may have questions/hesitation. May I provide some information to you today that might help?”

“Is there additional information that would be useful as you make your decision?”

When delivering this information, we encourage you to:

- Tailor the communication to each audience.
- If comfortable, share a personal story so that the information is relatable.
- Focus on messages that include hopefulness and excitement.
- Feature the perspective of community members, such as residents of public housing, or community members trusted by residents/patients.

Outlined below are **five key messages** aimed at raising vaccine confidence by providing clear, straightforward information.

Key Messages:

1. The COVID-19 vaccine was developed following rigorous approval processes.
2. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe.
3. The COVID-19 vaccine is effective.
4. The COVID-19 vaccine will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
5. Get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence

The COVID-19 vaccine was developed following rigorous approval processes.

- The COVID-19 vaccine was able to be developed quickly because of federal funding and the world's leading scientists working together to share information about the disease.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines for Emergency Use Authorization after following both agencies' stringent standards and processes, and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices made up of national infectious disease specialists. Additional vaccines may be available soon.

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe.

- All three aforementioned vaccines were tested in large clinical trials of more than 30,000 participants per vaccine, with meaningful representation across diverse populations across the country.
- Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine use a live virus that causes COVID-19. However, the Johnson & Johnson does use a modified version of the virus to increase immune response.
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are made using messenger RNA (or mRNA). mRNA vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease. mRNA vaccines have been studied for more than a decade for flu, Zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was briefly paused because a small number of patients developed a rare blood clotting side effect. Scientists studied these side effects and determined that the risk to the general public was extremely small. On April 23rd, the vaccine was re-introduced, since the very large benefits of receiving the vaccine outweigh the very small risk of side effects.

The COVID-19 vaccine is effective.

- Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have an efficacy rate of at least 94%. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has an efficacy rate of at least 66%.
- The side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine demonstrate your body is doing what it needs to build up immunity.
- Most side effects only last one to two days.
- Millions of people in the United States have already received COVID-19 vaccines, with many reporting mild to moderate side effects. These side effects may include soreness at the injection site and/or flu-like symptoms, including fever, chills, tiredness and headache.

Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence

The COVID-19 vaccine will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

- The COVID-19 vaccine works by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine protects you from getting severely sick should you become exposed to the virus.
- By getting vaccinated, you are protecting more than just yourself – you are protecting your family, friends, those you work with and those in your community.
- People of color have been getting sick and dying of COVID-19 at rates higher than their non-people of color counterparts.
- The results show that the potential benefits of the vaccine outweigh the known and potential harms associated with COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated will help us turn the corner on the pandemic.

Get vaccinated as soon as possible.

- The vaccine is widely available at community health centers, local pharmacies, and mass vaccination sites. Make an appointment to get the vaccine as soon as you are able.
- The vaccine is available free of charge to all eligible individuals. Age-based eligibility for vaccines continues to evolve based on outcomes from ongoing clinical trials.
- The Pfizer vaccine is now available to adolescents ages 12-17 years old.

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- <https://www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus/health-center-program>
- <https://www.healthcenterinfo.org/priority-topics/covid-19/>

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