

COVID-19 Vaccine Messaging

Updated: July 28, 2021

Key Messages

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and key to getting our lives closer to normal.
- Getting vaccinated prevents serious illness, hospitalization, and death; it also helps reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- 99.5% of Texans who died from COVID-19 from February 8 to July 14, 2021 were unvaccinated.
- Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some experience post-COVID conditions that can last months, commonly called long-haul symptoms.
- The vaccines offer protection against the more contagious known variants of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- **With the Delta variant, vaccination is more urgent than ever.**
- **Data show Delta is different than past versions of the virus: it is much more contagious and some vaccinated people can get Delta in breakthrough infection and may be contagious.**
- **Unvaccinated individuals should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated.**
- **In areas with substantial and high transmission, CDC recommends that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent spread of the Delta variant and protect others.**
- CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Getting Vaccinated

- Getting vaccinated is free and does not require ID, proof of residency, citizenship, or insurance.
- Houston Health Department-affiliated vaccination sites are available with or without appointments and located across the city.
- Visit HoustonEmergency.org or call 832-393-4220 to find a nearby vaccination site.
- Free COVID-19 vaccination in your own home is available to qualifying older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans. Call 832-393-4301 to see if you qualify.
- People with disabilities can call 832-393-5500 for vaccination assistance.

Variants

- Viruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, constantly change through mutation, and new [variants](#) of a virus are expected to occur over time.
- These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than the traditional strain, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19.
- Multiple variants are actively spreading in Houston.
- When the virus continues to spread, there are more opportunities for the virus to change and for new variants to emerge.



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- Getting vaccinated is the best way to control the spread of variants.
- Studies suggest that antibodies generated through vaccination protect against known variants.

Post-COVID Conditions (Long-Haul Symptoms)

- Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some people experience [post-COVID conditions](#), commonly called long-haul symptoms.
- People who experience long-haul symptoms report they last weeks or months after first being infected.
- This can happen to anyone who had COVID-19, even if the illness was mild, or if they had no initial symptoms.
- Common post-COVID conditions include shortness of breath, fatigue, cough, headache, heart palpitations, diarrhea, sleep problems, fever, dizziness, rash, muscle pain, change in taste and smell, mood changes, and brain fog.

Vaccine Information

- [Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) trial results that suggest their vaccines are 94% or more effective.
- [Johnson & Johnson](#) trial results suggest its vaccine is over 66% effective.
- Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for emergency use in people age 18 and older and Pfizer's vaccine is authorized for people age 12 and older.
- Pfizer's second dose is recommended 3-6 weeks after the first and Moderna's second dose is recommended 4-6 weeks after the first dose. Johnson & Johnson requires only one dose.
- The vaccines are not interchangeable. For two-dose vaccines, a person must receive two doses of the same vaccine to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- Get vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Studies shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19.
- CDC data shows no safety concerns related to getting vaccinated [during pregnancy](#).
- You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines at the same visit. You no longer need to wait 14 days between vaccinations. Experience with other vaccines has shown that the way our bodies develop protection, known as an immune response, after getting vaccinated and possible side effects of vaccines are generally the same when given alone or with other vaccines.
- Delay vaccination for at least 90 days if you received a passive antibody therapy (monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma) as part of COVID-19 treatment.
- Recipients will get a vaccination card showing which vaccine and lot number they received and when (if) they should return for a second dose.

Safety and Efficacy

- Vaccines are cleared for [Emergency Use Authorization](#) after rigorous review by FDA based on scientific evidence about safety and effectiveness gathered through large clinical trials.
- People with diverse races and ethnicities tested the vaccine in large clinical trials to prove they are safe and highly effective.



- None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
- The vaccines do not alter DNA.
- COVID-19 vaccines were developed using science that has been around for decades.
- Side effects may include fatigue, headache, fever, chills, nausea, muscle pain and joint pain. These side effects show that the vaccine is working and resolve within a day or two.
- Vaccine recipients should be monitored for at least 15 minutes for a more serious allergic reaction. People who have a history of allergic reactions should be monitored for 30 minutes.

CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People

- Data show the Delta variant is different than past versions of the virus: it is much more contagious and some vaccinated people can get Delta in breakthrough infection and may be contagious.
- Unvaccinated individuals should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated.
- In areas with substantial and high transmission, [CDC recommends](#) that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent spread of the Delta variant and protect others.
- CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Houston Health Department

- **Access & Equity**
 - The Houston Health Department nationally recognized Access & Equity response strategy puts vital resources directly in communities where people are more likely to die if they get COVID-19.
 - HHD used CDC's Community COVID Vulnerability Index (CCVI) to identify Tier I and Tier II priority zip codes where people there are more likely to die if they get COVID-19.
 - HHD puts vaccine clinics deep in these communities through partnerships with community clinics, pharmacies, churches, and other trusted community organizations.
 - The department conducts door-to-door canvassing to register people on the spot for these community-based vaccination clinics.
 - Vaccine is also provided at strategically located health centers and multi-service centers.
 - HHD also offers mass vaccination sites across the city and provide transportation assistance.
 - The department's "Take Your Best Shot" campaign uses mass messaging such as TV, radio, print, social media, and website advertising to build vaccine confidence.
 - HHD is also growing partnerships with trusted voices in the community to further build confidence vaccines are safe and effective.

End of Texas Mask Mandate



- The State of Texas ended the statewide mask mandate on March 10, 2021 and allowed businesses to re-open at 100% capacity.
- Local governments can not impose mandates beyond state restrictions.
- Private business owners can determine if masks are still required on their properties.

