

COVID-19 Vaccine Messaging

Updated: May 18, 2021

Key Messages

- COVID-19 vaccines are key to helping our lives get back to normal.
- The vaccines protect you and those around you by significantly reducing the chances of getting COVID-19, spreading it, and becoming seriously ill with the disease.
- Fully vaccinated people can return to activities they stopped doing during the pandemic.
- People who are not fully vaccinated should continue wearing masks and practicing social distancing in public.
- People with diverse races and ethnicities tested the vaccine in large clinical trials to prove they are safe and highly effective.
- People can not get COVID 19 from the vaccine because it does not contain the virus.
- People should be vaccinated regardless of whether they already had COVID-19.
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses for maximum protection, so people will need to get a second dose of the same vaccine three to six (Pfizer) or four to six (Moderna) weeks later. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires just one dose.
- Getting vaccinated is free and does not require 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/covid19, or call 832-393-4220 or 832-393-4301 to find a nearby HHD-affiliated vaccination site.
- People with disabilities can call 832-393-5500 for 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.
- Multiple variants are actively spreading in Houston, with B.1.1.7, commonly called the U.K. variant, being the most common.
- These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than the traditional strain, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to control the spread of variants.
- So far, studies suggest that antibodies generated through vaccination protect against these variants. This is being closely investigated and more studies are underway.

Vaccine Information

- Pfizer and Moderna announced trial results that suggest their vaccines are 94% percent or more effective. View FDA's fact sheets: [Pfizer](#) | [Moderna](#).
- Johnson & Johnson announced trial results that suggest its vaccine is over 66% effective. [View J&J FDA Fact Sheet](#).



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- Moderna and Pfizer is approved for emergency use in people age 18 and older and Johnson & Johnson is approved for people age 12 and older.
- The vaccines are not interchangeable. For two-dose vaccines, a person must receive two doses of the same vaccine to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- 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.
- CDC recommends that the vaccine be offered to people regardless of whether they have a history of COVID-19 infection.
- Preliminary CDC data shows no safety concerns related to administering Pfizer and Moderna vaccines during pregnancy. Although more follow-up data is needed, these preliminary findings are reassuring. Visit [CDC's webpage](#) for recommendations about COVID-19 vaccine for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you get a COVID-19 vaccine, wait at least 14 days before getting any other vaccine, including those for flu or shingles. If you get another vaccine first, wait at least 14 days before getting your COVID-19 vaccine.
- 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.
- View the FDA's [Path for a COVID-19 Vaccine from Research to Emergency Use Authorization](#) for more details on the FDA's approval process.
- People can not get COVID 19 from the vaccine because it does not contain the virus.
- The vaccines do not alter DNA.
- The science behind the vaccines was studied for more than a decade.
- 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

- People are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two weeks after second shot of Pfizer or Moderna or two weeks after the single shot of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- According to [new CDC guidance](#) released May 13, fully vaccinated people can:
 - o Resume activities they stopped doing during the pandemic.
 - o Do not need to wear a mask or social distance unless federal, state, or local laws require it.
 - o Refrain from quarantine/testing if exposed to infected person.



- o Go to work if they are exposed and are asymptomatic
- o Do not have to quarantine after a known exposure, if they live in a non-healthcare congregate setting
- o Be exempted from routine screening/testing for COVID-19 if asymptomatic without an exposure
- o Travel within the U.S. and without having to test for COVID-19 or quarantine after returning.
- o Travel internationally without testing for COVID-19 before their trip unless required by destination. Also, there is no need to quarantine after return unless required by their home jurisdiction if they follow COVID-19 safety protocols while traveling.
- o A negative COVID-19 test is still required before boarding flight back to the U.S.
- **School settings:**
 - o Even fully vaccinated people (including teachers, administrators and staff) should continue to wear masks in schools because the majority of students have not been vaccinated.

Houston Health Department

- **Second Doses:**
 - o The Houston Health Department reaches out by text message and email with information to schedule second doses of COVID-19 vaccine. The messages contain a survey link for people to self-register for a second dose appointment.
 - o The messages are sent 24-48 hours before Moderna's 28-day recommended due date.
 - o People who are overdue for their second dose from the Houston Health Department can email HHDCOVID19.CRT@houstontx.gov or call 832-393-5190.
 - o If contact information has changed since a person received their first dose from the health department, please alert the call center at 832-393-4220.
- **Access & Equity**
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
 - o HHD puts vaccine clinics deep in these communities through partnerships with community clinics, pharmacies, churches, and other trusted community organizations.
 - o The department conducts door-to-door canvassing to register people on the spot for these community-based vaccination clinics.
 - o Vaccine is also provided at strategically located health centers and multi-service centers.
 - o HHD also offers mass vaccination sites across the city and provide transportation assistance.
 - o 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.
- Business owners can determine if masks are still required on their properties.

