A campaign to increase vaccine confidence while reinforcing basic prevention measures

Adolescent COVID-19 Vaccinations Toolkit

HHS COVID-19 Public Education Campaign

This toolkit is for partner organizations to communicate directly with general audiences.
Outreach on Adolescent COVID-19 Vaccinations

Introduction

On May 10, 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expanded the emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to include adolescents aged 12 to 15. On May 12th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) endorsed the use of the vaccine for adolescents.

Though most children with COVID-19 have mild or no symptoms, some children can get severely ill and require hospitalization. There have also been rare, tragic cases of children dying from COVID-19 and its effects, including multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, or MIS-C.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 public education campaign is a national initiative to increase public confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines while reinforcing basic prevention measures, such as mask wearing and physical distancing.

To achieve these goals, tailored toolkits like this are available with all the information and materials you need to help share the campaign messages in your community. Thanks to partners like you, science-based information can be widely shared to benefit the most people possible.

Through a nationwide network of trusted messengers and consistent, fact-based public health messaging, these efforts help the public make informed decisions about their health and COVID-19, including steps they can take to protect themselves and their communities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING VACCINATED

As of June 11, 2021, 64% of adults in the United States have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

But, less than 35% of adolescents aged 12-17 have received their first dose, and less than 20% are fully vaccinated.

It is critical that adolescent vaccinations catch up with adult vaccinations to prevent further community spread and help us get back to normal.
What You Can Do

Talk to teens and parents in your family or community about the importance of getting vaccinated.

Commit to taking new actions or redoubling efforts throughout the month of June to boost the number of adolescents in your community who are vaccinated.

Work with community organizations to expand access to vaccines for adolescent (e.g., at summer camps, schools). Host on-site clinics to help vaccinate children and adults, learn how to here.

Resources

- **Communicating with Adolescents and Parents**: Facts on COVID-19’s impact; talking points about the importance of vaccination, vaccine effectiveness and safety, and other preventive measures.
- **Key Things to Know**: The most important things you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccines.
- **FAQs**: Comprehensive list of questions and answers related to vaccine safety, effectiveness, side effects, availability, fertility and menstruation impacts, parent consent, and cost.
- **Door-to-Door Flyer**: Handout with information about how to find vaccines nearby.
- **Social Media**: Sample Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn messages and images.
- **Talking About COVID-19 Vaccines with Family and Friends**: Tips on how to have open and helpful conversations about COVID-19 with people you care about.
- **Quick Tips for Partners**: Ideas on the various communication tactics you can use to amplify the campaign messages among members of your community.
- **What Fully Vaccinated People Need to Know**: Recommendations on what people who have been fully vaccinated can start doing, and things they need to continue to do to protect themselves and others.

For updates and other material resources, visit [WeCanDoThis.HHS.gov](https://www.WeCanDoThis.HHS.gov).
How to Talk About COVID-19 Vaccines with Parents and Teens

Be active in answering questions

Many parents and teens will have questions, and it is important to provide them a venue to ask them. There are many actions community organizations can take to help answer these questions:

- Host a public event where parents and teens can come and ask questions. Invite a local pediatrician or state or local health official to join
- Host a social media town hall to encourage discussion about the vaccine
- Send out email blasts that answer questions you are hearing frequently in the community

Listen to their questions with empathy

COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it's normal for people to have questions about them. The sheer amount of information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines can be overwhelming to anyone. You can help by listening without judgment and identifying the root of their concerns.

Acknowledge their emotions so they know they have been heard. For example, you can say, “It sounds like you are stressed at work and home, and concerns about the vaccine are another source of stress. That's really tough.”

Ask open-ended questions to explore their concerns

Open-ended questions are meant to elicit more than a yes-or-no answer. Asking open-ended questions can help you understand what your friend or family member is worried about, where they learned any troubling information, and what they have done to get answers to their questions. For example, you can ask, “How did watching that news report make you feel? What did you do next?”

Do not be judgmental and respectfully ask questions that help you understand their concerns. For example, avoid things like, “That’s a silly concern,” or “Why would you be worried about that?”

Ask permission to share information

Once you understand your friend or family member’s question or concern, ask if you can provide some information, tell them where you get information you trust and be careful not to push information on them. You can find answers to common questions from reputable sources, including CDC.gov, the local health department website, or other trusted sources such as their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
Sometimes, sharing quick, accurate answers to common concerns your family or friends might have can go a long way toward moving someone from worry to confidence. If you don’t know the answer to their questions, consider offering to help look for information.

**Help them find their own reason to get vaccinated**

Everyone who chooses to get vaccinated does it for a reason—to protect their family, to protect their children, to be less anxious, to visit their parents, or to get back to activities like seeing friends, resuming work, or returning to school. After addressing concerns with empathy, respect and facts, you can steer the conversation from “why not” to the important reasons that matter to them—their “why.” You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with each other safely. The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

**Help make their vaccination happen**

Once someone decides on their “why,” help them make a commitment to get vaccinated. Help make the path to vaccination shorter, easier, and less stressful for them. Offer to help your family member or friend make a vaccination appointment at a location nearby and, if needed, go with them to the appointment. Offer to help with transportation or to babysit if they need childcare. Remember, every person who chooses to get vaccinated brings us all a step closer to moving past the COVID-19 pandemic. As a trusted messenger to your family and friends, you can play a role in their decision to vaccinate.
Communicating with Adolescents and Parents

General Points on Adolescents Getting COVID-19 Vaccines

- **The vaccine is the best way to protect you, your family, and your community from COVID-19** – the vaccine is nearly 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. Getting vaccinated is the best way keep you and those you love you safe.

- **Getting vaccinated gets us back to normal** – getting vaccinated is the best way to defeat this virus and get back to safely gathering with friends, in-person school, concerts, sporting events, and travel.

- **All the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States are safe.** Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines will continue to undergo extensive safety monitoring. CDC recommends getting the vaccines as soon as you are eligible.

- **The vaccine is the best way to protect your child from COVID-19** – the vaccine is nearly 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

- **Talk to your pediatrician or family medicine provider if you have questions.** It’s perfectly normal to have questions about your child’s care – talk with your child’s clinician to address specific questions.

General Points on the COVID-19 Vaccines

- All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines are **nearly 100% effective** at preventing hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

- COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects in some people, but serious side effects are **extremely rare**. Most side effects go away on their own in a few days. The most common side effect is a sore arm at the injection site.

- Safe COVID vaccines were developed quickly through use of a **century of vaccine experience**, technology that was new to vaccines but had been studied for two decades; a prototype coronavirus vaccine already in development at National Institutes of Health; and tens of thousands of volunteers for clinical trials that enabled rapid accumulation of data on safety and effectiveness. Simultaneous vaccine production and analysis of testing data also allowed vaccines to be shipped within days of FDA authorization.

- The federal government is providing the vaccines free of charge to all people in the United States.

- Everyone age 12 and older can now get a COVID-19 vaccine. You have three ways to find vaccines near you:
  - Go to [vaccines.gov](vaccines.gov)
  - Text your ZIP code to 438829
  - Call 1-800-232-0233
Key Things to Know About COVID-19

COVID-19 vaccines are safe
All authorized COVID-19 vaccines meet FDA’s rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines. These vaccines will continue undergoing the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history to make sure that they are safe. Learn more.

COVID-19 vaccines can’t make you sick with COVID-19
None of the vaccines being used or tested in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that they cannot make you sick with COVID-19. Learn more.

COVID-19 vaccines are effective
All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19. Learn more.

COVID-19 virus variants and vaccines
Scientists are studying different forms, or variants, of the virus that causes COVID-19 to see if the vaccines will work against them. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized and recommended for use in the United States offer protection against most variants. For this reason, COVID-19 vaccines are an essential tool to protect people against COVID-19, including illness caused by the new variants. CDC will continue to monitor the impact these new variants may have on how well the vaccines work. Learn more.

COVID-19 vaccines are free
The federal government is providing the vaccines free of charge to all people in the United States. Learn more.

Once you’re fully vaccinated
According to CDC, if you’re fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your final dose), you DO NOT have to wear a mask indoors or outdoors in public (except in health care settings), and you DO NOT have to keep your distance from other people. Until you’re fully vaccinated, you should continue to:

- Wear a mask when inside public places.
- Keep at least 6 feet apart from people who don’t live with you and who may not be vaccinated.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
• Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

Vaccinated and unvaccinated people must still follow federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws, rules, and regulations. That includes public transportation, airport/airplane, local business, and workplace guidance. Also, if you have a medical condition or you take medicines that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected from COVID-19 even if you're fully vaccinated. Talk to your health care provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking precautions.
Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 and Adolescents

Kids aren’t getting severely ill from COVID-19, so why should I or my child get vaccinated?

- Even if you don’t get severely ill, you can still spread the virus to someone who might – like a grandparent, someone at church, a teacher at school, or anyone in your community.
- We are also learning more about the long-term effects of COVID-19. Even if you don’t get severely ill right now, or even have serious symptoms, you still could have long-term damage that causes health problems down the road.

Why is only Pfizer available for teens?

- So far, only Pfizer has applied and been approved to make their vaccine available to people as young as 12.
- On June 10th Moderna applied and is currently under review for their vaccine to be available to people as young as 12.

How do we know this vaccine is safe for kids and teens?

- The vaccine has been through rigorous testing and thorough review by the FDA and CDC. **Thousands** of adolescents between 12-15 were in the clinical trials, and among those who received it, the vaccine was 100% effective at preventing COVID.

Will I or my child get Myocarditis and/or Pericarditis from receiving the Pfizer vaccine?

- In most cases, patients who presented for medical care have responded well to medications and rest and had prompt improvement of symptoms. Reported cases have occurred predominantly in male adolescents and young adults 16 years of age and older. Onset was typically within several days after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination, and cases have occurred more often after the second dose than the first dose. CDC and its partners are investigating these reports of myocarditis and pericarditis following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.
- CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older given the risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications, such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death.
- For more information on the clinical considerations on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after receipt of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines among adolescents and young adults [here](#).
Will the COVID-19 vaccine have any long-term impacts pregnant women?

Based on how these vaccines work in the body, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a risk for people who are pregnant. The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are mRNA vaccines that do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 and therefore, cannot give someone COVID-19. Additionally, mRNA vaccines do not interact with a person’s DNA or cause genetic changes because the mRNA does not enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine while I’m on my period (or when my child is on their period)?

According to the CDC and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), there’s no reason to put off getting vaccinated if someone is on their period. The CDC and FDA have been closely monitoring safety data and has not seen any patterns of concern.

Do parents need to give consent before a vaccine is given to an eligible minor?

The federal government does not have specific requirements for medical consent for vaccination. States/jurisdictions have medical consent laws that address the circumstances under which a medical provider must seek consent prior to a medical procedure and the processes for obtaining that consent. These laws vary across jurisdictions. Providers may also be subject to policy requirements for consent within their own organizations.
Frequently Asked Questions About Vaccine Safety

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?
Yes. All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States meet the FDA’s rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered in the United States since December 14, 2020, and all COVID vaccines will continue to be monitored for safety.

How can COVID-19 vaccines be safe since they were developed so fast?
Safe COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly through the use of a century of vaccine experience; technology that was new to vaccines but had been studied for two decades; a coronavirus vaccine already in development at the National Institutes of Health; and tens of thousands of volunteers for clinical trials that enabled rapid accumulation of data on safety and effectiveness. Simultaneous vaccine production and analysis of testing data also allowed vaccines to be shipped within days of FDA authorization.

Will the shot hurt or make me sick?
Some people might get sore muscles, feel tired, or have mild fever after getting the vaccine, but most people report only a sore arm where they got the shot. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will go away on their own in a few days. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Why are people having allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine?
A few people have had allergic reactions called anaphylaxis after getting a COVID-19 vaccine but were treated and have recovered. Your doctor can help you decide if it’s safe for you to be vaccinated.
Frequently Asked Questions About Vaccine Effectiveness

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?
Vaccines train your immune system to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. With vaccines, you can build immunity to a disease without getting the disease.

How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?
All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

How long do COVID-19 vaccines last?
Scientists don’t know right now how long COVID-19 vaccines protect people, but they are investigating this in medical studies.

Do I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I’ve already had COVID-19?
Yes. Scientists don’t yet know how long natural antibodies in people who have had COVID-19 will be protect them from being reinfected.

Will the COVID-19 vaccines prevent me from infecting others?
COVID-19 vaccines reduce the likelihood that you’ll develop and be able to spread COVID-19. A growing body of evidence shows that the risk of vaccinated people getting and spreading the virus to others is low, but ongoing studies are further analyzing this question.

Do the vaccines work on the new COVID variants?
Scientists continue to study different forms, or variants, of the virus that causes COVID-19 to see if the vaccines will work against them. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized and recommended for use in the United States offer protection against most variants. For this reason, COVID-19 vaccines are an essential tool to protect people against COVID-19, including illness caused by the new variants. CDC will continue to monitor the impact these new variants may have on how well the vaccines work.
Frequently Asked Questions About Vaccine Availability

When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?
Vaccines are here now and everyone age 12 and older can get them. You have three ways to find vaccines near you:

- Go to vaccines.gov
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

How much will a COVID-19 vaccine cost?
The federal government is providing the vaccine free of charge to all people in the United States.

Do I need to wear a mask after getting vaccinated?
According to CDC, if you're fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your final dose), you DO NOT have to wear a mask indoors or outdoors in public (except in health care settings), and you DO NOT have to keep your distance from other people.

Until you're fully vaccinated, you should continue to:

- Wear a mask when inside public places.
- Keep at least 6 feet part from people who don't live with you and who may not be vaccinated.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

Vaccinated and unvaccinated people must still follow federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws, rules, and regulations. That includes public transportation, airport/airplane, local business, and workplace guidance.

Also, if you have a medical condition or you take medicines that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected from COVID-19 even if you're fully vaccinated. Talk to your health care provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking precautions.
Tips to Amplify We Can Do This

Resources

EMAIL DISTRIBUTION
Email your network and share the latest campaign messaging and resources, be sure to include a clear call to action.

E-NEWSLETTER
Highlight campaign resources and information in a short blurb in your e-newsletters.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
Share the campaign ready-made social media graphics, messages, and videos with your stakeholders and encourage them to re-post.

WEBSITE
Feature campaign resources on your website and encourage readers to use and share COVID-19 information.

WEBINAR OR OTHER VIRTUAL EVENT
Showcase campaign materials and host a discussion with your community about COVID-19 prevention.

TEXT MESSAGES
Share messages with your stakeholders with a link to campaign resources.

BLOG POST
Publish an article on how to use campaign resources within your community.
Get a COVID-19 Vaccine Today

How to get vaccinated

Everyone age 12 and older in the United States can now get a free COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of your immigration or health insurance status.

You have three easy ways to find vaccines near you:

🔍 Go to vaccines.gov

📟 Text your ZIP code to 438829

📞 Call 1-800-232-0233

Get vaccinated to protect yourself and the people around you.

Why you should get a COVID-19 vaccine

- Getting vaccinated is the best way to defeat this virus and get back to normal—safely gathering with family and friends, indoor dining, weddings, concerts, sporting events, and travel.
- The vaccines are effective. They prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

Encourage others to get vaccinated and learn more at cdc.gov/coronavirus
Adolescent Social Media Messages

Social Media Sample Messages

Everyone 12 and over is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination. We need everyone to do their part to help defeat this virus so we can get back to spending time with the ones we love. #WeCanDoThis

Find a vaccine location near you:
- Search vaccines.gov
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

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