



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# COVID-19 Vaccines

A Conversation Guide for Managers

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*The material that follows are illustrative for businesses to consider using in their conversations about vaccine use between managers and employees.*

## Introduction

The health and safety of our employees, workers and customers is our top priority. Now that COVID-19 vaccines are widely available to everyone in America ages 5 and older, we want our employees to have trusted information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other public health sources to help them make the best decisions for themselves and their loved ones.

We strongly encourage managers to discuss COVID-19 vaccines during an upcoming team meeting and guide a group conversation using the information below.

## 6 Tips for a Conversation about COVID-19 Vaccines

- 1. Listen more than you talk.** This is a conversation, not a debate. It's not your job to convince people to get vaccinated. Rather, you're sharing information to help them make their decision. Be positive, inviting, and respectful. Acknowledge "the choice is yours to make with your doctor or healthcare provider."
- 2. Lead with empathy.** Respect people's concerns and acknowledge that it's ok for everyone—even you—to have questions about vaccines. Don't talk down to people, lecture or make people feel guilty. Instead, be understanding, positive and hopeful. Listen for what's holding people back then help them find [their own reason](#) to get vaccinated.
- 3. Facts about safety matter.** Don't just say "the science is solid." Provide facts about the safety and efficacy of vaccines using the talking points provided below. Remember, you shouldn't give medical advice, so encourage people with more advanced questions to talk with their doctor or healthcare provider. Finally, be sure to speak plainly and in a manner everyone will understand.
- 4. Emotions are important.** Show how vaccinations can help us get back to the things we love, like connecting with others, spending time with family and friends, traveling, and going to events. Some people may feel fear or mistrust. Others may be frustrated by the new variants or shifting public health guidance on masks. Listen for these

feelings and share facts to help people work through their concerns and frustration.

5. **Be inviting.** As more people get vaccinated, ask them to share their stories with others. Hearing from someone who's already been vaccinated is one of the best ways to put others at ease. Celebrate the people who have taken this step for their health and the health of others.
6. **Be authentic.** Share why getting vaccinated and why vaccines are important to you and your family.

## Proposed Talking Points

### COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and they work.

- There are multiple COVID-19 vaccines that have been granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This means the clinical evidence for the vaccines have met the agency's rigorous scientific standards and are considered to be safe and effective. They have been studied in clinical trials with large and diverse groups of people, of various ages, races, and ethnicities.
- On August 23, 2021, the FDA announced full approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for adults ages 16 and older. Full FDA approval takes longer than Emergency Use Authorization because more data needs to be processed and reviewed over a longer period of time. When a product is fully approved by the FDA, patients can be assured that its recommendation is grounded in large amounts of scientific data.
- Vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 without having to get sick or put yourself and others at risk of severe illness and death.
- Getting vaccinated is a much safer way to build protection than getting the disease. COVID-19 can have serious, long-term, or life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get infected, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Evidence is emerging that people get better protection by being fully vaccinated, compared with having had COVID-19. One study showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than twice as likely to get the virus again compared to people who are fully vaccinated.

- You may have some side effects after getting vaccinated. That’s a normal sign that your body is building protection—and they should go away within a few days. Your arm may be sore or swollen. You may also feel tired, have a headache, fever, or chills. This does not mean you have COVID-19—in fact, it’s not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines.
- Vaccines are being administered by trained health professionals. Some people might be offered a vaccine that requires two doses, given several weeks apart, while other people might be offered a single-dose vaccine. It may take several weeks after vaccination for your body to be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- Federal health officials [recommend](#) a booster dose for certain populations (based on their age and underlying conditions), and have also made booster shots available to workers whose jobs put them at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. However, the CDC says not all workers in this category will need booster shots. Instead, they are available to those workers if they would like to get one, based on their individual benefits and risks. For now, boosters are available only to people who received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
- As of October 21, 2021, adults can “mix and match” any of the three COVID-19 vaccines for their booster. A booster dose is available to all eligible adults regardless of which vaccine you initially received.
- The vaccines’ effectiveness against COVID-19 remains high, especially in protecting people against serious illness or death. In fact, boosters show that medical experts are continuing to find ways to prolong protection through vaccines.
- If you are immunocompromised or have a weakened immune system, the CDC [recommends](#) that you receive a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to strengthen your protection against Delta. You should speak with your doctor or healthcare provider about whether a third vaccine dose and other precautions are right for you.

## **I got vaccinated, and I hope you will too. Vaccines are important to me and my family because...**

- COVID-19 vaccines can help us get back to the things we love.
- They help protect me and the people I love from getting COVID-19.
- They reduce hospitalizations and save lives.
- As more people get vaccinated, they'll provide the safety and protection that will allow our economy to fully recover.
- We all want to protect our families, friends and loved ones. We want to get back to the moments we miss with our family and friends. Vaccinations can help us get back too many of the things we miss most, like spending time together, traveling, and attending events.

## **Vaccines are free and widely available.**

- Everyone in the United States ages 12 and older is eligible to receive free COVID-19 vaccines, regardless of immigration status. You don't need health insurance to get vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Vaccines are widely available at more than 80,000 locations across the country, including at over 40,000 retail pharmacies. Ninety percent of Americans live within five miles of a vaccine site.
- Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.
- In order to protect yourself and prevent the spread, it's important that you get vaccinated at your earliest opportunity.

## **My top priority is the health and safety of our staff, our families, and our customers.**

- If you are [sick with COVID-19](#) or think you might have COVID-19, stay home except to get medical care, separate yourself from other people and take other precautions to prevent the spread. And tell your manager as soon as safely possible so we can assess whether any other members of our team could have been exposed.



- You should get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms, have close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with confirmed COVID-19, or take part in activities that put you at higher risk for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.
  - If you are already fully vaccinated, you should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until you receive a negative test result.
  - If you are not fully vaccinated, you should quarantine and get tested immediately after exposure, and, if negative, tested again in 5–7 days after last exposure or immediately if symptoms develop during quarantine.
- Even after you are fully vaccinated, CDC recommends that everyone wear masks in public indoor settings in [areas with substantial or high](#) COVID-19 transmission. A majority of counties across the U.S. are experiencing either “substantial” or “high” transmission rates that call for indoor mask-wearing, according to the CDC.

**[COMPANY] is committed to helping you [get the facts](#) about vaccines. We also want to make it easier for you to get vaccinated or take eligible children to get vaccinated. Here are some ways [COMPANY] is supporting you:**

*Note: Add here details about your company’s COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, including any paid time off or other incentives you’re offering to employees and workers who get vaccinated. Below are best practice examples:*

- [COMPANY] will offer paid time off to any employee or worker who gets vaccinated. If you do experience side effects, I’ll offer paid leave to help you fully recover.
- [COMPANY] will offer paid time off to working parents that choose to vaccinate eligible children against COVID-19, including time to care for children recovering from potential side effects.
- [COMPANY] will provide a transportation voucher (i.e., Uber/Lyft gift card, bus pass, subway card, etc.,) to help cover your transportation costs to and from a vaccine site.
- [COMPANY] will reimburse your meals on the day(s) you get vaccinated, up to \$[amount].
- [COMPANY] will reimburse you for childcare expenses during your vaccine appointment(s), up to \$[amount].

## Conversation Starters

- I thought we could start with a conversation about how everyone is feeling about COVID-19 vaccines, and what information you need to answer any questions. My role is to support you and help you get the answers you need.
- Has anyone here gotten vaccinated and wants to share their story?
- Does anyone want to share how COVID-19 vaccines have helped them reconnect with family and friends, travel, attend events, or take part in other activities?
- Is there anything I can do to make it easier for you to get vaccinated at your earliest opportunity?
- For those of you still deciding, I have some information to share, and then let's talk through your questions. I won't be able to answer them all, but I'll do my best to make sure you know where to get answers.
- And if there are any questions I can't answer, I encourage you to ask them to your doctor or another healthcare professional.

## It is normal to have questions.

- It's normal to be cautious when something new comes along. Getting informed about COVID-19 vaccines is an important step to help us stop this pandemic.
- Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider. We all need to be comfortable with our decisions and your doctor can help.
- OK...what questions do you have?