



## COVID-19 Vaccine information CDPH “Toolbox Talks” Scripts

*Use these scripts and key messages to educate, help answer questions about COVID-19 vaccines, encourage and support your network – staff, community group, etc. – in their decision to get vaccinated. For additional resources, visit [chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://chicago.gov/COVIDvax).*

### TOPIC 1: THE BASICS

- While the COVID-19 pandemic has kept us apart, there is hope – vaccines are here. Taking the vaccine is the best way to protect yourself, your family and your community.
- There are three vaccines currently available– a single-dose vaccine from Johnson & Johnson, and the vaccines developed by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna both require two doses. All three vaccines are extremely effective at preventing hospitalization or death from COVID-19.
  - As of May 2021, the Pfizer vaccine is available for people age 12 and up.
  - The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are available for people age 18 and up.
  - You may have seen reports that the Pfizer and Moderna shots are more effective – around 95 percent compared to 70 percent for the Johnson & Johnson.
  - It’s important to remember that the vaccines were studied at different times in the pandemic and with different COVID-19 variants, so it’s difficult to compare them to each other to say if one is “better.”
  - All three vaccines are effective against COVID-19 variants.
  - As a comparison, studies have shown that the flu vaccine is between 40 and 60 percent effective among the overall population during seasons when most circulating flu viruses are well-matched to the flu vaccine.<sup>1</sup>
  - It’s important to know that all three shots are safe, and highly effective – and health experts encourage taking any vaccine that is easily available to you.
- In April, the FDA and CDC took a break from giving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine while they investigated a rare type of blood clot. After looking at all of the data, they found

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/vaccineeffect.htm>

only 15 cases of severe blood clots in almost 8 million people who received the J&J vaccine. Since these blood clots are so rare, it is safe to take a J&J vaccine, and the FDA and CDC recommended that we continue its use.

- Everyone should get the vaccine, even if you tested positive for COVID-19 over the past year. Some people have gotten COVID-19 more than once and new COVID-19 variants are now in the United States. The vaccine also offers more protection against reinfection than your body could develop on its own from already having COVID-19, and it also gives protection against variants.
- The vaccine is not only safe, it's free! You can get vaccinated in a number of ways (similar to the process of how you might get a flu shot):
  - Through your healthcare provider;
  - At a local pharmacy;
  - Through your employer.
  - At a City of Chicago vaccination site.
- Visit [www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine](http://www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine) or call 312-746-4835 to find your vaccine.
- For both Pfizer and Moderna, you'll get two shots, given 21-to-28 days apart, depending on what vaccine you are given. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a single shot. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection to COVID-19. Know that the vaccine does not contain a live virus and cannot give you COVID-19.
- More information about the vaccine is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](http://Chicago.gov/COVIDvax), but for now, please remember:
  - The COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting sick with COVID-19.
  - **All three** vaccines are very effective in preventing you from getting seriously sick with COVID-19 and preventing you from getting hospitalized with COVID-19. All three are very effective at preventing death from COVID-19 infection.
  - The COVID-19 vaccination is safe. You may experience minor side effects, but you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.
  - The COVID-19 vaccine is our best chance to end the pandemic.
  - Visit [www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine](http://www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine) or call 312-746-4835 to find your vaccine.

## TOPIC 2: SAFETY

- I know some of you may be worried about the safety of the vaccine. Please rest assured, no steps were skipped during the clinical trial process and the approval process for the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - The FDA authorizes vaccines after they pass three phases of clinical trials. These clinical trials require thousands of people and months of data.
- The reason some worry is because the vaccine was developed fairly quickly. The development of this vaccine has been faster than vaccines in the past because...
  - The technology used to develop the COVID-19 vaccines is not new – scientists, health and medical experts, and researchers just had to apply the technology to this virus. Around the world, these experts were working together to develop a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Many people volunteered for the clinical trials. The vaccines were tested with tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and that they protect people of different races, ethnicities, and age groups.
  - COVID-19 outbreaks across the United States made it possible to rapidly see that volunteers who received placebo shots were getting ill at much higher rates than volunteers who received the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Every study, every phase, and every trial was reviewed by the FDA and a safety board.
- In April, the FDA and CDC took a break from giving the Johnson & Johnson (also known as J&J vaccine) while they investigated a rare type of blood clot. After looking at all of the data, they found only 15 cases of severe blood clots in almost 8 million people who received the J&J vaccine. Since these blood clots are so rare, it is safe to take a J&J vaccine, and the FDA and CDC recommended that we continue its use.
- With all that being said, public health officials are very confident the J&J, Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are safe.
- The good news is that all three vaccines are available in Chicago and you can find an appointment for any of the three types on [Zocdoc.com/vaccine](https://www.zocdoc.com/vaccine).
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, designed to help your body identify the characteristic “spike protein” associated with COVID-19 and defeat it.

- mRNA vaccines teach our cells the “recipe” for a piece of the “spike protein” for SARS-CoV-2.
- mRNA vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. They CANNOT give someone COVID-19.
- mRNA vaccines DO NOT affect or interact with our DNA in any way.
  
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a “vector vaccine” which means it uses a weakened virus to carry the instructions for making a coronavirus protein into our cells. When our cells make the protein, it causes an immune response inside our bodies. Our immune system remembers this protein so it can respond later on if we are exposed to COVID-19.
  
- If you feel like you want more information, the website [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://www.chicago.gov/COVIDvax), has helpful resources and materials that can answer all your questions.
  
- Some safety reminders I want to emphasize:
  - The COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting sick with COVID-19.
  - **All three** vaccines are very effective in preventing you from getting seriously sick with COVID-19 and preventing you from getting hospitalized with COVID-19. All three are very effective at preventing death from COVID-19 infection.
  - The COVID-19 vaccination is safe. You may experience mild side effects for 2-3 days, but you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.
  - The COVID-19 vaccine is our best chance to end the pandemic.
  - Visit [www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine](https://www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine) or call **312-746-4835** to find your vaccine.

## TOPIC 3: CLARIFYING RUMORS

- Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic is having devastating effects. We've all made changes to adapt over the past year – and now, vaccines offer us our best chance to end the pandemic.
- As the city continues to receive and administer vaccines, I wanted to take a few minutes to set the record straight on rumors circulating about them.
- While we just started hearing about COVID-19 last year, the technology used to create the vaccine has been in development for some time. Two of the COVID-19 vaccines involve technology called messenger RNA, or mRNA.
  - While this is the first time mRNA is being widely used in a vaccine for the public, researchers have actually been working on this vaccine strategy for more than a decade.
  - The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. The mRNA from the vaccine cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way.
  - The vaccine does not contain a live virus, so it cannot give you COVID-19.
- Even if you already had COVID-19 in the past, you should still get a vaccine. Re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, and the vaccine is recommended regardless of whether or not you already had COVID-19 infection.
- Everyone who can should get vaccinated. It decreases your risk of getting very sick or hospitalized with COVID-19. While most people who get COVID-19 are able to recover, others who live through the disease develop severe complications – like damage to the lungs, heart, brain or other long-term health problems that experts are still working to understand.
- The vaccines are safe, and our best hope for ending the COVID-19 pandemic. All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in scientific trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different races, ethnicities, and ages.
- We know what is in these vaccines. All three vaccines available in the United States have published the ingredient lists. None of them contain the actual virus, and cannot make

you sick with COVID-19. Despite theories circulated on social media, they do not contain microchips or any form of tracking device.

- While Johnson & Johnson is one-dose, for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna you do need to get two shots. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone who takes the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine will have to receive the second shot to receive maximum coverage from the vaccine.
- More information about the vaccine is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://www.chicago.gov/COVIDvax), but for now, please remember:
  - The COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting sick with COVID-19.
  - All three vaccines are very effective in preventing you from getting seriously sick with COVID-19 and preventing you from getting hospitalized with COVID-19. All three are very effective at preventing death from COVID-19 infection.
  - The COVID-19 vaccine is our best chance to end the pandemic.
  - Visit [www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine](https://www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine) or call [312-746-4835](tel:312-746-4835) to find your vaccine.

## TOPIC 4: WHAT TO EXPECT

- There's been a lot of talk about the COVID-19 vaccine – who makes it, when to get it, where to get it. But today I want to talk quickly about what to expect when you get vaccinated.
- As you prepare for your appointment:
  - Do not take any pain medication before your shot.
  - Plan to wear a mask and stay six feet away from others while inside and in lines.
- After you get your shot, you will be monitored on-site for 15 minutes. If you have a history of significant allergic reactions, you will be observed for 30 minutes following vaccination.
- You will receive a vaccination card or printout that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. **Take a photo of your card and send it to yourself – you may need this in the future and it's important!**
  - If you receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, you'll register for your second shot. It is really important to get BOTH doses. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone will have to receive the second shot to receive maximum coverage from the vaccine.
  - The Pfizer-BioNTech shots are given 21 days apart, while the Moderna shots come 28 days apart.
  - The second dose should be the same brand as the first dose you received (for example, if you get Moderna brand for your first shot, your second shot should also be Moderna).
  - If you receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you only need the one shot.
- You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection to COVID-19. They vary person-to-person, and although these side effects may be unpleasant for one-to-three days, they are not dangerous.
- After you're vaccinated:
  - You're encouraged to register for v-safe at [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov) and help keep COVID-19 vaccines safe. V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that provides personalized health check-ins.
    - Through v-safe, you can quickly tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

- Depending on your answers, someone from CDC may call to check on you and get more information.
  - You are considered “fully vaccinated” 14 days after completing your vaccine. For Pfizer and Moderna, that means 2 weeks after your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose. For J&J that is 2 weeks after getting your one J&J shot.
  - Once you are 2 weeks after completing your vaccine you can do more activities safely – such as socializing with small groups of other fully vaccinated people without masks or distancing.
- More information about the vaccine is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://chicago.gov/COVIDvax), but for now, please remember:
  - The COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting sick with COVID-19.
  - All three vaccines are very effective in preventing you from getting seriously sick with COVID-19 and preventing you from getting hospitalized with COVID-19. All three are very effective at preventing death from COVID-19 infection.
  - The COVID-19 vaccination is safe. You may experience minor side effects, but you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.
  - The COVID-19 vaccine is our best chance to end the pandemic.
  - Getting vaccinated allows us to engage in more activities safely, allowing us to get back to activities we love – like seeing family and friends.
  - Visit [www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine](https://www.ZocDoc.com/vaccine) or call [312-746-4835](tel:312-746-4835) to find your vaccine.