

Conversation Guide & Checklist on COVID-19 Vaccines



Based on [recommendations](#) from the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#), an independent panel of medical and public health experts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that both healthcare personnel (HCP) and residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs) be included among those offered the first supply of COVID-19 vaccines.

You are on the front lines and risk being exposed to COVID-19 each day on the job. Early vaccination can protect not only you from getting sick, but also help protect residents and your family members who may have underlying health conditions that put them at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Q. Why is it important that LTCF staff receive COVID-19 vaccine, even if LTCF residents are vaccinated?

Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to prevent getting sick with COVID-19 disease. HCP, including LTCF staff, were prioritized to receive COVID-19 vaccine because of their essential role in fighting this deadly pandemic and their increased risk of getting COVID-19 **and** spreading it to their patients.

The decision to get vaccinated protects more than just your health. It can also help protect your colleagues, facility residents, families, and communities.

Q. Will I still need to wear masks, gowns, or personal protective equipment in the facility after receiving COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic. However, staff members who have been vaccinated should continue to follow all [current guidance](#) to protect themselves and others, including proper use of [personal protective equipment](#). Because we need to use all the prevention tools available, you should continue to cover your nose and mouth with a [mask](#) when around others, avoid [close contact](#) with people who are sick, stay [6 feet away from others](#), avoid crowds, and [clean your hands](#) often.

The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to [protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Q. Are COVID-19 vaccines being held to the same safety standards as other vaccines in the United States?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety standards as all other vaccines. Several expert and independent groups evaluate the safety of vaccines being given to people in the United States. After a review of all the available information, CDC and [ACIP](#) agree that the lifesaving benefits of vaccinating LTCF residents and staff against COVID-19 outweigh the possible risks.

Q. Can I feel confident that COVID-19 vaccines are safe?

Yes. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety standards as all other vaccines. All COVID-19 vaccines being administered to LTCF staff and residents were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA will keep monitoring the vaccines for safety issues.

Q. Will I experience side effects after I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

There may be side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccination, but they should go away within a few days. Possible side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This does not mean you have COVID-19. Side effects are signs that the vaccine is working to build immunity. Call your healthcare provider if they don't go away in a week or you have more serious symptoms.

For LTCFs CDC will work with pharmacies and other partners to report possible side effects (called “adverse events”) to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) (VAERS). You and your coworkers are also encouraged to report any adverse events immediately.

After receiving the vaccine, staff are encouraged to [enroll in v-safe](#). This is a smartphone tool you can use to tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. If you report serious side effects, someone from CDC will call to follow up with you.

Q. How can I tell if my symptoms are due to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

It can be hard to tell the difference between side effects from the vaccine and symptoms that you could have if you were infected with COVID-19. Your side effects from the vaccine could be mistaken for having COVID-19. So, it will be important to know the difference between the symptoms:

Symptoms that **CAN** occur after either COVID-19 **vaccination or infection** include:

- Fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscles aches, and joint pain

Symptoms **NOT** likely to be from the COVID-19 vaccination (and you should look out for) include:

- Cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat or loss of taste or smell. These are not the typical symptoms from a COVID-19 vaccination. They could be symptoms of COVID-19 or another infection. Talk to your facility leadership about staying home from work.

Your facility administrator and clinical leadership may have a [plan for helping staff manage symptoms](#) that may occur after receiving COVID-19 vaccination.

Please visit the COVID-19 vaccination FAQs page for additional information:
vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-faq/vaccination/

COVID-19 Vaccine Communication & Confidence Checklist



Use this checklist to promote COVID-19 vaccine confidence among your healthcare personnel. This list includes both CDC and VDH resources for administrators and staff.

- 1** Give COVID-19 vaccine communication and confidence basics presentation to healthcare personnel.
CDC Resources:
 - Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Among Your Patients: Tips for the Healthcare Team (PowerPoint)
 - How to Build Healthcare Personnel's Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines (Guide)

- 2** Hold an initial discussion with 8–10 staff to identify strategies for making vaccine confidence visible.
CDC Resource:
 - COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Conversation Starter (Guide)

- 3** Provide training and education
 - Educate all staff about COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Train healthcare teams about the vaccines, how to build vaccine confidence, and how to have effective conversations about vaccines with patients.**CDC Resources:**
 - COVID-19 Vaccine Basics: What Healthcare Personnel Need to Know (Flyer)
 - Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Among Your Patients: Tips for the Healthcare Team (Flyer)
 - Quick Answers to Common Questions People May Ask about COVID-19 Vaccines: Tips for Healthcare Professionals (Flyer)

- 4** Post COVID-19 vaccine educational materials in staff break rooms and common areas in your health facility (posters, fact sheets, handouts, FAQs).

- 5** Post COVID-19 vaccine information blogs and/or articles on your website, intranet, and social media platforms (blog posts, social media, videos).

- 6** Create and publicize a feedback mechanism for staff members to ask questions or receive guidance about COVID-19 vaccination (email inbox, phone number, point of contact).

- 7** Share regular staff updates on COVID-19 vaccination efforts (staff meetings, email blasts).

- 8** Communicate where, when, and how healthcare personnel will be offered the vaccine. Share any plans to support personnel needing time away from clinical care if they are experiencing any expected post-vaccine side effects (posters and flyers in break rooms, staff meetings, email blasts).

- 9** Have conversations with staff about the vaccines, and use strategies identified during staff discussions to make vaccine confidence visible in your facility.
CDC Resource:
 - COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Conversation

- 10** Share testimonials from healthcare personnel who volunteer to speak about why they got vaccinated and promote among staff, such as on the intranet or internet, in staff meetings, and on social media (social media, blog posts).

- 11** Recognize healthcare personnel who have been effective vaccine confidence boosters (staff meetings, email blasts, social media, blog post).