



**ROLL  
UP  
YOUR  
SLEEVES**  

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**NEW YORK**



**COVID-19 TOOLKIT FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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[I. About The Task Force](#)

[II. Why This Toolkit?](#)

[III. A Call to Action](#)

[IV. Are You a High-Risk New Yorker?](#)

[V. So, What About the Vaccine?](#)

[VI. Addressing Justified Mistrust](#)

[VII. FAQs About the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

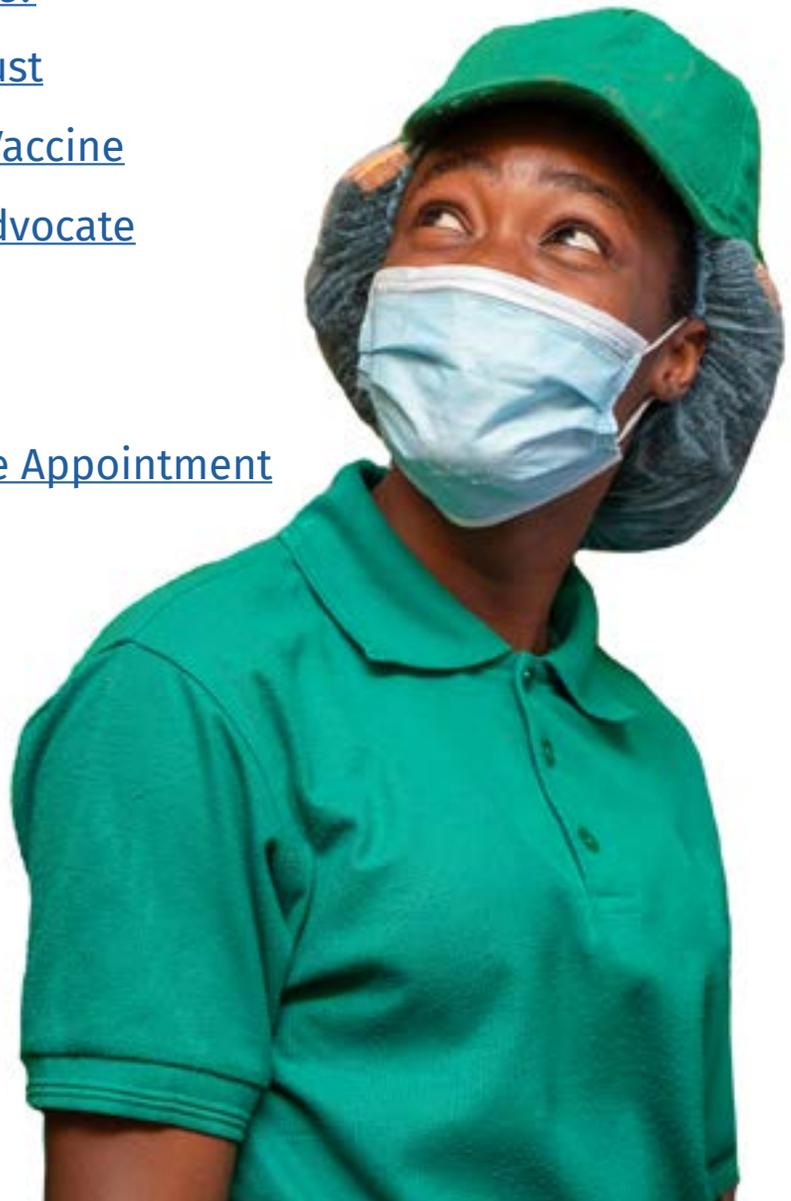
[VIII. Be a Vaccine Awareness Advocate](#)

[IX. Myths vs. Facts](#)

[X. Core Talking Points](#)

[XI. How to Schedule A Vaccine Appointment](#)

[XII. Online Resources](#)



## I. ABOUT THE TASK FORCE

Concerned that America was ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deliver any of the COVID-19 vaccines to Black communities, Black leaders announced the creation of a task force in New York to both ensure the vaccine is readily accessible to Black New Yorkers and address concerns in Black communities about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Task Force for Vaccine Equity and Education was formally announced through a media release, and named Marc Morial of the National Urban League, Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Network, and Sen. Nina Turner as co-chairs. The mission of the Task Force for Vaccine Equity and Education, which focuses on Black community, is to work with and help operationalize an internal government task force, the Governor's Vaccine Equity Task Force, which has a broader mandate that includes Latinx, Asian and poor communities.



## I. ABOUT THE TASK FORCE (cont.)

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Among the co-signers of the letter were the co-chairs and members of the Task Force for Vaccine Equity and Education, including:



**MARC MORIAL**  
*President and CEO of the  
National Urban League*



**REV. AL SHARPTON**  
*Founder and President of  
the National Action Network*



**SEN. NINA TURNER**  
*Founder of Amare  
Public Affairs*

**DR. HAZEL DUKES**  
*President of the  
NAACP New York State  
Conference and a member  
of the NAACP National  
Board of Directors*

**JENNIFER JONES AUSTIN**  
*CEO and Executive Director,  
FPWA*

**KYLE BRAGG**  
*President of 32BJ  
Services Employees  
International Union*



## II. WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

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Accurate and accessible information is the first line of defense in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The information provided in this toolkit is intended to provide you with the basics about the virus and the tools available to you to combat it. We hope this empowers you to make informed decisions about the prevention methods that might work best for you and your loved ones.



## III. A CALL TO ACTION

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Because the COVID-19 pandemic has most severely impacted Black and Brown communities throughout New York State and across the nation, it is in these communities where information and outreach must be concentrated and shared with urgency. Committed and invested community members like you are needed to act as trusted ambassadors who can outreach to neighbors, family, and friends with comprehensive and accurate healthcare information that can help them make sound choices affecting their health and wellbeing, and that of others in their communities. Your ability to mobilize others by sharing verified resources can make all the difference in how effectively we confront and eventually overcome the pandemic.



## IV. ARE YOU A HIGH-RISK NEW YORKER?

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If you are a Black or Brown resident of this state, yes you are. The coronavirus pandemic has unveiled many pre-existing racial disparities that keep communities of color and other underserved populations in the bull's eye of the COVID-19 target. Black people account for approximately 15% of COVID-19 deaths where race is known. In New York City, Black populations in low-income communities are impacted by the coronavirus at twice the rate of that of their white counterparts. Other high-risk populations include:



### ESSENTIAL WORKERS

These workers, including, but not limited to food access workers, first responders, medical professionals, home healthcare workers, public transit staff, and childcare workers tend to be more vulnerable to potential COVID-19 transmission scenarios than those with the option of working remotely, in isolated environments.

*[A more detailed list of essential workers can be found by reviewing the state guidance provided in \[Executive Order 202.6\]\(#\). Residents of New York City can also find a more detailed list of essential workers on \[NYC Comptroller's website\]\(#\).](#)*

## IV. ARE YOU A HIGH-RISK NEW YORKER? (cont.)

### AGING ADULTS

The risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk. For example, people in their 50s are at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 40s. Similarly, people in their 60s or 70s are, in general, at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 50s. The greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 is among those aged 85 or older.



Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may require:

- Hospitalization,
- Intensive care, or a
- Ventilator to help them breathe, or
- They may even die.

*[More information can be found at the CDC website](#)*



## IV. ARE YOU A HIGH-RISK NEW YORKER? (cont.)

### PRE-EXISTING HEALTH CONDITIONS



Adults of any age with [certain underlying medical conditions](#) are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. Severe illness from COVID-19 is defined as hospitalization, admission to the ICU, intubation or mechanical ventilation, or death.

Persons with pre-existing health conditions include cancer, obesity, sickle cell disease, type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and heart disease.

### LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

People from low-income communities where there are fewer resources and access to economic wealth and health care are at a higher risk of COVID-19. In New York City, individuals living in low-income neighborhoods work outside of the home during the pandemic at a rate higher than the citywide average. These neighborhoods are largely minority communities in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and parts of Queens.

**Being part of a high-risk population for COVID-19 infection does not mean you are destined to become infected. And it does not mean that you are powerless to protect yourself from becoming infected. In addition to mask wearing and social distancing, help, in the form of a vaccine against the virus, has arrived.**

## V. SO, WHAT ABOUT “THE VACCINE?”

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The COVID-19 Vaccine is now available as a preventative measure against the virus. The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine helps protect you by creating antibodies in your body without you having to become sick with COVID-19. This is also what makes vaccination such a powerful tool in protecting people from getting sick.

The current vaccine will require 1 shot or 2 shots given three or six weeks apart to get the most protection. The COVID-19 vaccine is injected into the upper part of the arm using a syringe, and just like other vaccines, the provider will clean the skin where the shot will go in and place a bandage over the area where the shot was given.

Before you get vaccinated, at your appointment you should receive a fact sheet that provides information about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you will receive and forms you’ll need to complete before your vaccination.

*For more information about the New York State vaccination process, please visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine)*



## V. SO, WHAT ABOUT “THE VACCINE?” (cont.)

### VACCINE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING

Medical experts, scientists and government have taken steps to assure the general population that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe. The vaccine has been authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and a New York State Independent Clinical Advisory Task Force, after having gone through several clinical trials with thousands of participants from diverse backgrounds. Here is what we know so far about how the vaccine was developed and tested:

### *A Scientific Headstart...*



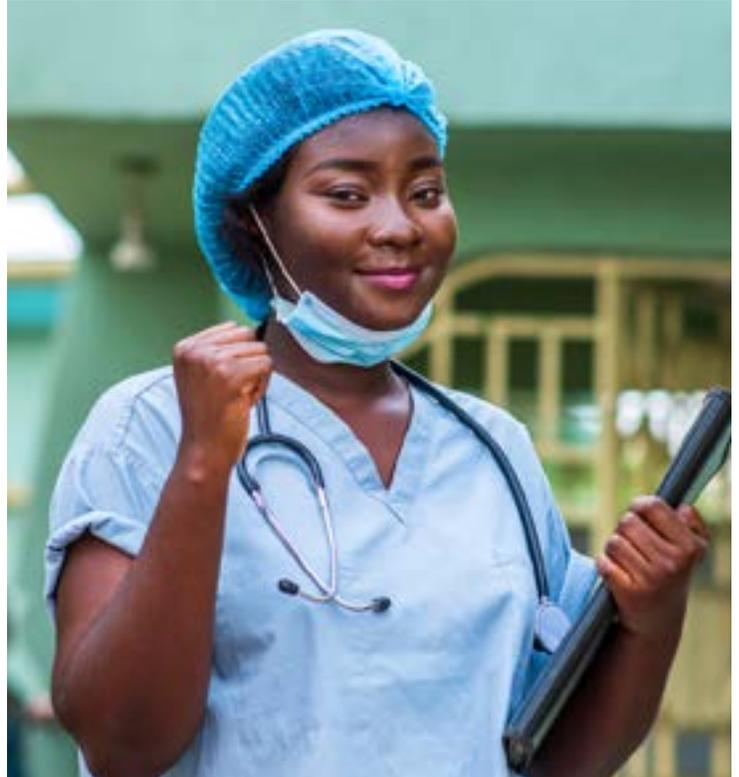
Scientists have known a great deal about coronavirus-related diseases for decades. This means that scientists had a head start at gathering the scientific data and information needed to develop a vaccine long before the current pandemic started.

Advances in scientific technologies have also laid the foundation for a COVID-19 vaccine, making it possible for a COVID-19 vaccine to be developed way faster than conventional vaccines.

## V. SO, WHAT ABOUT “THE VACCINE?” (cont.)

### *The Need for a Vaccine...*

COVID-19 impacted the populations across the globe. A vaccine against this deadly virus immediately became a priority of the US government. Due to the gravity of the current public health pandemic, The FDA was able to focus attention and resources to test and authorize the vaccine for emergency use. Additional assessments were done by health experts and agencies to ensure safety and effectiveness.



Government, scientists, researchers, and other partners across the world have worked simultaneously and collaboratively to test, manufacture, and produce a vaccine without cutting any safety corners. Government and philanthropic funding also poured into the vaccine development process – allowing researchers and vaccine developers to get the resources they needed to test and manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine.

*For more information about the New York State vaccination process, please visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine)*

## V. SO, WHAT ABOUT “THE VACCINE?” (cont.)

### *Representation in Clinical Trials...*



Tens of thousands of diverse populations, including Black and Brown populations, participated in clinical trials, which helped scientists assess the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines for a variety of communities. This is important since, for many years, most clinical trials favored white participants, which often meant that minorities most impacted were underrepresented in critical research.

## VI. ADDRESSING JUSTIFIED MISTRUST

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The reality of Black and Brown communities being disproportionately affected by disease and experiencing the repercussions of systemic and overt racism practiced in healthcare, government, and all aspects of civic life is not a new phenomenon.

- It is a documented fact that throughout history, medical experiments were performed using Black Americans, without their informed consent and with disastrous results.
- It is understandable that you may feel distrustful at the mention of exposing yourself to new remedies and vaccines, as they become available.



**But distrust should never result in disengagement from information where life-threatening health situations that might affect you or others in your community are concerned.**

As with any new or developing health-related issue that aggressively affects a population, becoming educated about it is the key to protecting yourself and overcoming it. This is why it's important to remain open to learning about how and why vaccines are playing a big part in slowing down the spread of COVID-19.



## VI. ADDRESSING JUSTIFIED MISTRUST (cont.)

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COVID-19 is scary. And its effects can be deadly if they are not able to be treated. It is vital that you remain curious and invested in everything being done to treat and stop the spread of the disease.

**Let's face it**, there was a time when wearing masks, frequent sanitizing, and social distancing were not a part of your normal routine. You might have even *thought* doing so was all an over-exaggeration and a bit too much. But your thoughts about these extreme measures probably changed once seeing and experiencing the spread of the virus became a very real part of your daily life.



The introduction of a vaccine is now the newest preemptive measure in the fight against the spread of the virus. As with any new health measure that has the potential to save lives, look before you leap. ***But don't let fear, intimidation, misinformation, or old traditions keep you from learning as much as you can about the most effective ways to combat the infection and spread of COVID-19.***

Please read further to learn some basic facts about the vaccine, to help you make informed decisions about your own health maintenance in the weeks to come.

## VII. FAQs ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

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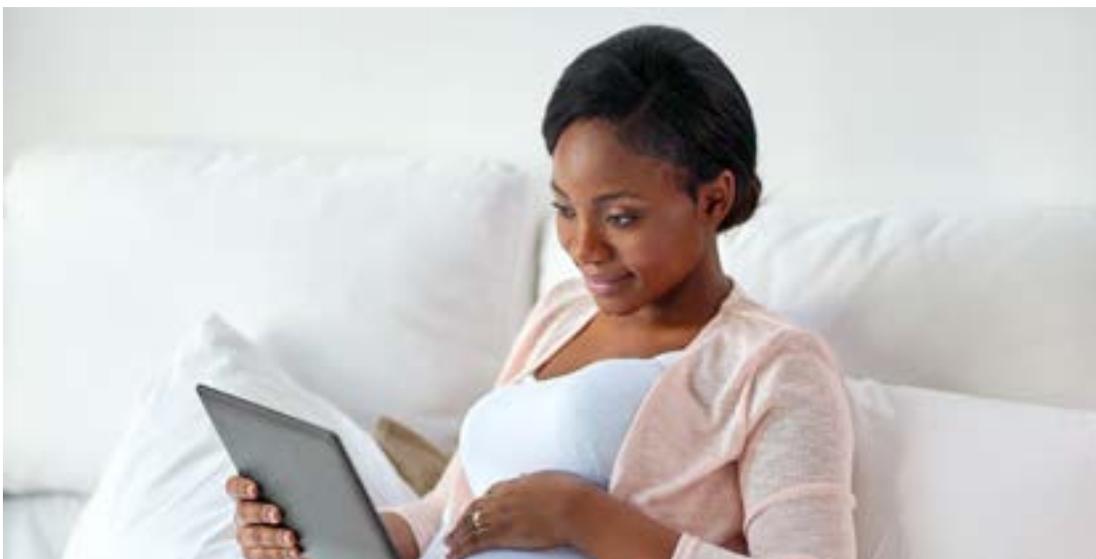
### *I tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies. Do I still need the vaccine?*

Yes. The CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can be infected more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from the virus, it's not known how long this protection will last. [More information can be found at the CDC website.](#)



### *Is the vaccine safe for children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women?*

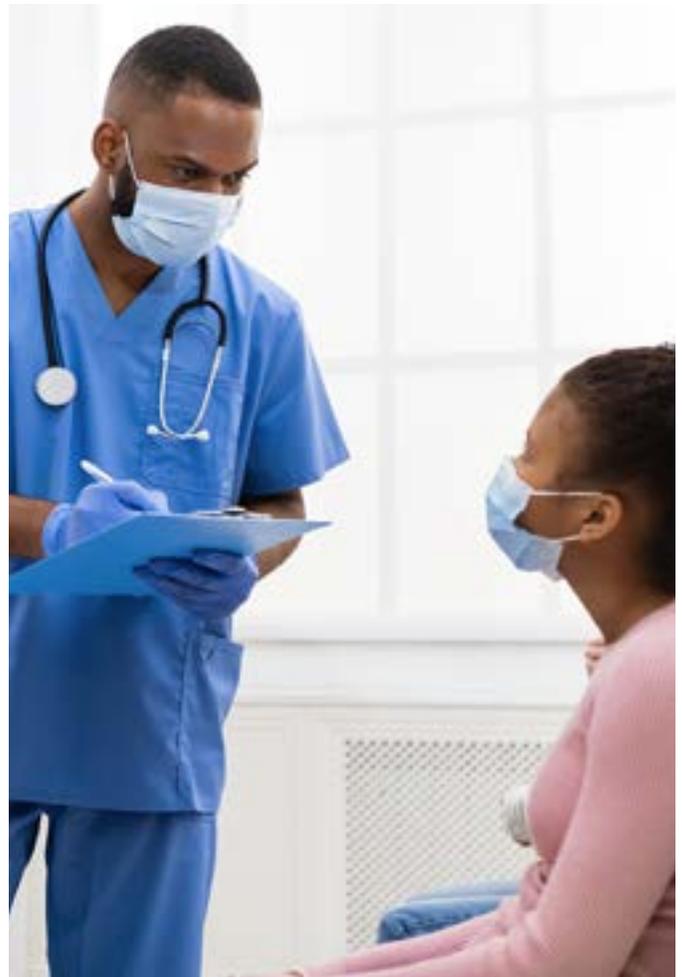
Pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people. **If you are pregnant, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine.** Getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. If you have questions about getting vaccinated, a conversation with your healthcare provider might help, but is not required for vaccination. Additional information can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). For information regarding the safety of COVID-19 vaccination for children, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



## VII. FAQs ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE (cont.)

### *What are the vaccine's side-effects?*

Just as with other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine so far can cause mild side effects and symptoms after they enter the body. The most common reported symptoms include pain or swelling at the injection site, fever, fatigue, headaches, swollen lymph nodes, and chills. According to health officials, these are normal signs of the body's response to the vaccine, and any side effects should go away within a few days. Health officials have also reported a few instances of individuals who experienced allergic reactions, such as hives, swelling, and wheezing (respiratory distress) after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.



If you have a history of severe allergic reactions to vaccines or to any injectable therapy, you should consult with your doctor or medical provider to decide if it's safe for you to get vaccinated. Additionally, if you elect to take the vaccine, your doctor or medical provider should be aware of any potential for a severe allergic reaction and have the proper medical treatment on hand if a severe allergic reaction were to occur. You are encouraged to report any side effects you may have

experienced after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine to a health care professional. For more information about possible COVID-19 vaccine effects, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## VII. FAQs ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

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### *How can I get vaccinated?*

New York City and New York State are distributing the COVID-19 vaccines to all New Yorkers age 16 and older. For more information about who is eligible for the vaccine, use the [“Am I Eligible” app](#) to check your eligibility and schedule an appointment. New York State also has a vaccination hotline you can call to schedule a vaccine appointment:

**1-833-NYS-4VAX (1-833-697-4829)**

### *Once I’m eligible, where can I get vaccinated?*

The current COVID-19 vaccine is available at your local health care providers, community and hospital clinics, pharmacies, and urgent care centers. Some COVID-19 testing sites and community pop-up locations may also offer vaccinations. To find a list of New York State-operated vaccination locations and availability, please use the [“Am I Eligible” app](#) to check your eligibility and schedule an appointment. Additionally, New York City residents can find a nearby COVID-19 vaccine provider by visiting [NYC COVID-19 Vaccine Finder](#).



## VII. FAQs ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE (cont.)

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### ***If I get a COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask and social distance?***

According to the CDC, fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask outdoors, during outdoor activities, or in small gatherings, except in certain crowded settings and venues. However, people should continue to wear masks and stay 6 feet apart from other people in other settings, like in public or indoors while gathering around unvaccinated people. Additional information can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### ***Is the COVID-19 vaccine free?***

The vaccine is free for everyone. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged a copay or other fee.

### ***Do I need to share my immigration status to be vaccinated?***

No, you do not. Getting vaccinated is not a public benefit under the public charge rule. When you receive the vaccine, your privacy will be protected. There are strict laws in place to ensure confidentiality of your personal information.

## VIII. BE A VACCINE AWARENESS ADVOCATE



Learning about and sharing accurate information regarding COVID-19, the vaccine, and all other prevention methods with family, friends, and members of your community can be lifesaving and rewarding. Information sharing is a great way to stamp out misinformation and fear that often pervades overlooked and underserved communities, hindering access to effective health care. By spreading the word about proven COVID-19 prevention methods, including the vaccine, you can become the catalyst that moves someone from the point of uninformed indecision to a place where they feel empowered to take new, yet promising measures to protect their health and the health of their family, friends, and neighbors.

Learn about some ways you can advocate on the next page...



## VIII. BE A VACCINE AWARENESS ADVOCATE (cont.)

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### *How Can I Be a Vaccine Awareness Advocate?*

**One-on-One Conversation:** Whether by phone, text, zoom, or DM (direct message) you have the power to communicate with hesitant individuals within your network to address their concerns, answer common questions with facts, and provide actionable steps they can take to ensure their wellbeing.

**Wellness Check-ins:** Many of us are already communicating with family and friends regularly to monitor their wellbeing. During your next check in, consider asking whether your loved one has a

comprehensive COVID 19 prevention plan. If they don't, inform them of all safe prevention methods currently available, and offer to assist with any access needs they communicate.

**Post to Social Media:** Leverage your own social media accounts to spread the word farther into the community.

**Be Transparent:** Telling your loved one about the prevention measures you are taking can help to build confidence and inspire action. If you plan on taking a COVID-19 vaccine, share this toolkit with your friends and community. To them, you are likely a more credible and trusted source than someone less familiar or considered to be less invested.



**Share This Toolkit:** This toolkit contains critical information about the vaccine and its potential life-saving impact on Black people. Share this toolkit with others in your community and inspire friends and family to make informed decisions concerning their health.

## IX. MYTHS VS. FACTS



***Myth: COVID-19 was deliberately created and released by people.***

**Fact:** Viruses can change over time. Occasionally, a disease outbreak happens when a virus that is common in an animal such as a pig, bat or bird undergoes changes and passes to humans. This is likely how the new coronavirus evolved.

***Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine will give me the disease.***

**Fact:** The COVID-19 vaccine is not comprised of materials that can cause disease. The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your body how to create virus proteins. Your immune system develops antibodies against these proteins that will help you fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if you are exposed to it.

***Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine will alter my DNA.***

**Fact:** The materials in the COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept. The cell breaks down and gets rid of the COVID-19 vaccine materials soon after it is finished using the instructions from it.



## IX. MYTHS VS. FACTS (cont.)



***Myth: The vaccine was developed too quickly, and is therefore ineffective or potentially harmful.***

**Fact:** Researchers have been studying and working with vaccines similar to the COVID-19 vaccine for decades. These similar vaccines have been studied before for flu, zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus (CMV). As soon as the necessary information about the virus that causes COVID-19 became available, scientists began designing instructions for cells to build the unique spike protein into an mRNA vaccine.

***Myth: I can't afford the risk of taking the vaccine.***

**Fact:** You cannot afford the risk of getting sick. Vaccines can help you stay healthy so you don't lose time combatting the disease, should you contract it. If you can avoid getting sick, you will have more time for your family, friends, and hobbies. Getting recommended vaccines will give you the best possible protection available against a number of serious diseases and can give you some peace of mind in the process.

## X. CORE TALKING POINTS: COVID-19 & VACCINES

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**Basics:** COVID-19 is a contagious disease that is disproportionately infecting Black and Brown people in New York State and around the country. You matter and must do everything possible to protect your health.

**Preventing Infection:** To prevent contracting the virus, stay home if you are sick, wash your hands regularly, wear a face covering, maintain six-feet of distance from others, and seriously consider taking a COVID-19 vaccine.

**The Vaccine is Safe:** Vaccination is the safest and most reliable way to keep yourself, your family, and your community healthy and safe from COVID-19.

**The Vaccine is Effective:** The COVID-19 vaccine is approximately 95 percent effective and has undergone rigorous safety testing.

**The Vaccine is Equitable:** The COVID-19 vaccine is free and available to all New Yorkers, regardless of race, gender, or immigration status.

**Take Action:** Building a personalized plan to prevent a COVID-19 infection that is rooted in facts is the best way to ensure your wellbeing during the pandemic. Following the protection and prevention protocols, and taking a vaccine, will give you the best plan of action currently available.



## XI. HOW TO SCHEDULE A VACCINE APPOINTMENT



In New York State you can use the [“Am I Eligible” app](#) to check your eligibility and schedule an appointment. New York State also has a vaccination hotline you can call to schedule a vaccine appointment: 1-833-NYS-4VAX (1-833-697-4829).

If you are getting vaccinated in New York City, you can check your eligibility, find provider locations, and schedule appointments using the [NYC DOHMH Vaccine Finder](#) Or call 877-VAX-4NYC (8am-9pm).

### VACCINE DISTRIBUTIONS ARE BY APPOINTMENT.

For a list of sites accepting walk-ins, please visit [covid19vaccine.health](https://covid19vaccine.health).

## XII. ONLINE RESOURCES

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A more detailed list of essential workers can be found here:

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/new-york-citys-frontline-workers/>

More information on Older Adults and People with Certain Medical Conditions at Increased Risk for COVID-19 can be found at the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/>

For more information about NYC vaccination process visit:

<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>

More information about COVID-19: Vaccine Eligibility - NYC Health visit:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-eligibility.page>

To find a COVID-19 vaccine provider near you, visit:

<https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>

For the most up-to-date information concerning the COVID-19 vaccine, eligibility and access, visit the following websites:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

New York City: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/index.page>

New York State: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>



For additional resources, visit [RollUpYourSleevesNY.org](https://RollUpYourSleevesNY.org)



For the most up-to-date information concerning the COVID-19 vaccine, eligibility and access, visit the websites for the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), [New York City](https://www.nyc.gov) and [New York State](https://www.ny.gov).

The COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Black Communities was developed in partnership with FPWA.

Thank you Catholic Charities for translating the COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Black Communities.

