

IT'S BALTIMORE VERSUS COVID.

COVID-19 Vaccination Talking Points

BACKGROUND

In order to reach Baltimore City's goal of fully vaccinating at least 80% of residents by February 28, 2022, we need to educate and mobilize residents by providing accurate and transparent health information. The messaging in this guide was developed in close collaboration with Vaccine Peer Ambassadors from the city's VALUE (Vaccine Acceptance and Access Lives in Unity, Education, and Engagement) initiative.

TIPS & TRICKS

DO...

- **Be transparent:** Be clear about the facts without any sugarcoating.
- **Use a positive tone:** Make it an invitation to get vaccinated instead of an obligation.
- **Use plain language:** Avoid medical or scientific jargon
- **Leverage trusted messengers:** People want to hear from people who look like them.

DON'T...

- **Reference how hard the pandemic has been:** It tends to put people in a pessimistic, hopeless or frustrated frame of mind.
- **Say vaccines will help us “get back to normal”:** For most people, post-pandemic life will never be “the way it was”.
- **Say “we’re all in this together”:** It negates the very real inequities of COVID-19.
- **Repeat myths:** Mentioning myths can reinforce them.



DO SAY...

Vaccine

Authorized by FDA based on clinical testing

Get the latest information

Keep your family safe; keep those most vulnerable safe

Public health

Health/medical experts

People who have questions

Talk to a health care provider or someone you trust



DON'T SAY...

Shot

Developed quickly, Operation Warp Speed, Emergency Use Authorization

There are things we still don't know

Keep your country safe

Government

Scientists

People who are hesitant, skeptical, resistant, or "anti-vaxxers"

Talk to your doctor

Overall Messaging

The following talking points address common concerns and questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.

BEST PRACTICE

Emphasize that vaccines are safe and offer protection from COVID-19.

Share that there are many ways that people can get vaccinated.

Acknowledge that being hesitant and having concerns is normal.

Be transparent about side effects.

Emphasize that the vaccine is free.

MESSAGING

Over 300,000 people in Baltimore have gotten vaccines—SAFELY. Join your neighbors in protecting yourself and others.

Choose what works for you:

- **At Home:** If you cannot leave your home, we'll come to you! Call 443-984-8650 or visit covax.baltimorecity.gov
- **Local Clinic:** Call 443-984-8650 or visit bit.ly/BMOREVAX.
- **Neighborhood Pharmacy:** Call 443-984-8650 or visit vaccines.gov

We know this is a personal choice. Talk with someone you trust if you have any questions.

You may feel some side effects from the vaccine for a short time. That shows your body is building the protection it needs. COVID can make you feel much worse than the vaccine's side effects. COVID can also be deadly.

All vaccines are 100% free! No insurance or documentation is required to get a vaccine

Overall Messaging (cont.)

Share that free transportation is available.

You can get a free and accessible ride if you need.

Call 410-372-3444 or e-mail covidtransport@mjminnovations.com.

Call soon to book your ride.

Avoid comparing efficacy.

The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccines are all safe and effective. You should take whichever vaccination you're offered.

Emphasize that variants are serious and vaccines help protect against them.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19. This includes Delta and other variants.

Explain that even if you had COVID, you need to get the vaccine.

Even if you had COVID, please get the vaccine. Without the vaccine, you could get COVID again and get very sick.

Reassure that the vaccine is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding people or those that wish to get pregnant.

Are you pregnant? The vaccine is safe for you and will protect you! When pregnant, you have a higher risk of getting very sick with COVID.

Trying to get pregnant? The vaccine will NOT keep you from getting pregnant.

[Note: On July 30th the ACOG \(The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists\) issued guidance recommending that all pregnant people get the COVID-19 vaccine.](#)

Support is available for people who speak other languages.

If you speak Spanish, call Esperanza Center at 667-600-2314 to be connected to a vaccination site that meets your needs.

If you speak another language - text or call IRC at 571-412-1202 to be connected to a vaccination site that meets your needs.

Accessible transportation and registration options are available.

Transportation is available. Call 410-372-3444 or e-mail covidtransport@mjminnovations.com. Please plan ahead and call in advance.

If you are homebound, you can register for a vaccination at home at covax.baltimorecity.gov.

Community-specific Messaging

The following talking points reflect specific concerns and questions from our VALUE Communities: pregnant & lactating people, residents who are 65 or older, Latinx residents, immigrant & refugee residents, youth, young men between the ages of 18-24, residents with disabilities and underlying conditions, people experiencing homelessness, and Orthodox Jewish residents. These are communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 or with barriers to vaccine access, including African-American communities.

COMMUNITY



MESSAGING



Older adults

- Getting vaccinated means getting back to family cookouts, trips to the casinos, and time with grandchildren.
- If you have a long-term health condition—like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease—it’s very important to get a COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccines were tested for safety in people with underlying medical conditions

Pregnant & lactating

- Pregnant women have a higher risk of serious complications from COVID, so it’s extra important to be protected from the virus.
- The benefit of vaccination extends beyond the woman being vaccinated - if you are pregnant, COVID-19 helps protect you, your baby and your family!
- Not only is getting vaccinated while breastfeeding safe, it also passes protection from COVID-19 to your baby through your breastmilk.

Latinx/Immigrants

- If you live in a home with many people and work in a place where it is difficult to social distance, it is important to get the vaccine to protect yourself.
- COVID vaccines are totally free, no insurance or documentation is required to get a vaccine.
- Although you may need to take time off of work to get COVID vaccines, getting COVID-19 may mean you can’t work at all. Talk to your employer to take the time to get a vaccine.

Orthodox Jewish

- Health care providers and rabbis worldwide support and encourage vaccination, including those in Baltimore. Talk with your Rav if you have any questions.
- Vaccination is available in the Jewish community at Bikur Cholim Clinic at Ner Tamid Synagogue. Go to baltimorebikurcholim.org or call 410-999-3700, x108 to register.
- If you need transportation, Jewber, a car service available in our Baltimore community, can be reached at 443-629-1477.

Community-specific Messaging (cont.)

Young men

- Getting the vaccine is easy– you can walk in and get a vaccine at a number of places without registering.
Go to bit.ly/BMOREVAX for a weekly schedule of vaccination clinics.

People Experiencing Homelessness & Marginally Housed Populations

- People experiencing homelessness and people who use drugs are at higher risk for COVID-19, so getting the vaccine is even more important to stay protected moving forward.

Disability & Underlying Condition(s)

- People with underlying conditions and the disabled are at far higher risk of getting COVID, being hospitalized with, and dying from COVID than the average population. Getting the vaccine can help prevent this. Your loved ones and caregivers can prevent this by getting the vaccine.
- Sore arm and body aches are common side effects with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine, but planning ahead to get the vaccine in a different body part, or switching to the J&J vaccine, or arranging for help/attendant care can make this process smoother.
- Even those with compromised immune systems are seeing benefits from vaccination, some immunity is better than no immunity.
- If you are homebound, you can register for a vaccination at home at covax.baltimorecity.gov.

Youth

Anyone age 12 and older can get vaxxed.

- People aged 12 and older can get the Pfizer vaccine.
- People aged 18 and older can get the Moderna or J&J vaccine.