



GREATER HOUSTON **PARTNERSHIP**

# Communicating with Employees on **COVID-19 Vaccines**

With all adults in Texas now eligible to receive one of the approved COVID-19 vaccines, employers can play an important role in communicating with workers about vaccine opportunities. The Partnership created this guide to help employers share key messages about the vaccines and the critical role they play in our community fully reopening and moving past the pandemic.

## **KEY MESSAGING**

The COVID-19 pandemic upended life as we knew over the last year. But the groundbreaking cooperation between leading medical experts here in America and pharmaceutical companies globally has made a return to normal possible thanks to COVID-19 vaccines. The speed of development was due to the sharing of research on a scale never attempted before – and every study, and every phase of every trial, was carefully reviewed and approved by a safety board and the FDA.

While the vaccines were first only available to frontline workers and the elderly, now it's everyone's turn. All Texans are eligible to receive one of the approved vaccines and we encourage you to make a plan to get the vaccine as soon as possible.

Getting vaccinated will help keep you, your family, and your community healthy and safe. At 95% efficacy, the vaccine is extraordinarily effective at protecting you from the virus. By getting vaccinated, you can help prevent more illnesses and deaths in the Houston area and end the damage to the economy.

If you're skeptical or concerned about side effects, we hear you. But it's important to note that the likelihood of a severe side effect is less than 0.5%. When mild side effects occur, they are a normal sign your body is building protection to the virus, and most go away in a few days.

Again, the sooner we can get the majority of Houstonians vaccinated, the sooner we can regain some normalcy in our daily lives. Let's all do our part.

## SUPPORTIVE FAQS

### Why get the vaccine?

- Getting vaccinated will help keep you, your family, and your community healthy and safe.
- By getting vaccinated, you can help prevent more illnesses and deaths in the Houston area and end the damage to the economy.
- Vaccines will help bring this pandemic to an end.
- At 95% efficacy, the vaccine is extraordinarily effective at protecting you from the virus.

### What about the potential side effects?

- If you're concerned about side effects, we hear you. The likelihood of a severe side effect is less than 0.5%, according to multiple clinical trials and ongoing studies.
- When mild side effects occur, they are a normal sign your body is building protection to the virus, and most go away in a few days.

### How do I know it's safe?

- Before any vaccine is widely distributed to the public, it is tested in clinical trials on tens of thousands of people to determine its safety and efficacy.
- While development and authorization of the COVID-19 vaccines were accelerated, that doesn't mean safety corners were cut.
- The different vaccines went through the same stringent testing process that other vaccines go through before public dissemination.
- Keep in mind that COVID-19 can be a fatal or debilitating disease, even in young healthy people. The risks from contracting the virus are far greater than the possible risks from receiving the vaccine.

### Which vaccine is better and can I choose which one I get?

- All of the vaccines have shown to be very effective at preventing COVID-19 infection.
- While there are slight variations in the efficacy rate among the different vaccines, you should aim to get whichever vaccine is available to you soonest to protect yourself and help mitigate the spread.

### How long after getting the vaccine am I protected?

- According to the CDC, it will take approximately one to two weeks following the second dose to be considered fully vaccinated.

### Should I get the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?

- If you've previously tested positive for COVID-19, you should get the vaccine but consider waiting 90 days after experiencing symptoms.
- COVID-19 infection does induce immunity, but less of an antibody response than the vaccine. The antibody response to the vaccine is dramatically higher than it is to natural infection.
- The vaccine should provide additional protection against reinfection.

### Do we still need to practice other measures if we've had the vaccine?

- While the vaccines are safe and extremely effective, not enough people in our community have been vaccinated yet to fully control the spread of COVID-19.
- That's why we must continue to practice the safety protocols that have become common over the last year: wear a mask, maintain your distance and wash your hands regularly. This includes in the workplace.