

**COVID-19 VACCINE  
MEETING FACILITATOR GUIDE**

**Duration:**

**Objectives:**

1. Provide public health information about COVID-19
2. Provide information on COVID-19 vaccines, the local plans and phases and explain the process to get the vaccines

**Disclosure:** This guide is intended for the use of community leaders/members interested in hosting meetings to educate the public about the COVID-19 vaccine. Please keep in mind that the meeting facilitators might not be a healthcare provider or a public health expert therefore some of the questions, presented during the Q&A, might not be answered during this session.

**Intro and ground rules (10 minutes)**

Welcome, everyone. My name is (your name here). I'm a (Introduce yourself and co-facilitators). Thank you for taking the time to meet with us about the COVID-19 vaccine. The purpose of this meeting is to provide some information about the COVID-19 vaccines available in Knox County. This presentation is intended to address the most common questions, myths and misinformation about the vaccine. If there are some questions that cannot be answered, we will refer you to additional resources at the end of this session. We hope you find this session useful.

**Ground rules**

This session will start with a 30-minute presentation and will be followed by a Q&A session. We ask you to wait until the end of the presentation to submit your questions by unmuting your computer or phone, or by using the chat feature. Here are some ground rules for the conversational part of this meeting:

- We are aware that people have strong beliefs both for and against the COVID-19 vaccine. We ask that you respect each other's comments and share your thoughts without personal attacks.
- We request that only one person speaks at a time and to please refrain from interrupting other participants.
- Talking to a black square can feel uncomfortable, so if you have a camera feature on your device, please turn it on.
- Finally, we ask you to be mindful of our limited time for this presentation so please be succinct with your comments.

**What is COVID-19?**

Before we begin our discussion on the COVID-19 vaccine, let us start with a brief overview of what COVID-19 is.

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and can result in a range of illness. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person between people who are in close contact, 6 feet or less for more than 15 minutes, cumulative over 24-hour time period. It can be spread through respiratory droplets from an infected person, and those droplets can land on the mouth/nose or be inhaled into the lungs by others nearby.

It is unknown how COVID-19 will affect each person. Some might have very mild symptoms or even be asymptomatic, while others end up needing hospital care. Older people and those with medical conditions are more at risk of serious illness.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Some of the common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever/chills, cough, and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. Other symptoms include fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of taste and/or smell. There are also severe symptoms where emergency medical care should be sought after immediately. Symptoms to look out for include: trouble breathing, persistent pain/pressure in chest, new confusion, inability to wake/stay awake, and bluish lips/face.

The best way to protect you and your family is through the 5 core actions:

1. Practice Physical Distancing
  2. Wear Cloth Face Coverings
  3. Practice Proper Handwashing
  4. Clean/Sanitize Surfaces
  5. Stay Home if You're Sick
- and
- Get vaccinated

## **A look at the COVID-19 vaccines**

### **How do vaccines work and why are they important?**

Understanding how vaccines work is crucial in increasing confidence about the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines help people develop immunity to viruses by developing antibodies to a specific virus or germ. When the body encounters this virus again, it already knows how to respond to not get sick.

COVID-19 vaccines are important to keep you, your family, and your community healthy and safe. They help us return to normal and help stop the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

- Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines used in the United States were tested in clinical studies involving tens of thousands of people and were found to be safe.
- These studies were done to make sure the vaccines meet safety standards and protect people of different ages, races, and ethnicities.
- A safety board approved every study, and the FDA carefully reviewed the data from every phase of every vaccine trial. They continue to collect and review data to ensure that long-term effects are safe.

### **How were the COVID-19 vaccines developed so quickly?**

- You've probably heard a lot about the groundbreaking speed these vaccines were able to be developed. That's due to several factors.
- The unusually high number of volunteers for clinical trials allowed enrollment goals to be met much faster.
- **Both private and government sectors invested billions of dollars more than ever before into vaccine development. This increase in funding allowed for more widespread and thorough research.** There was greater cooperation between leading medical experts and multiple companies, industries, and countries than any other vaccine in history. This cooperation helped speed up the process of vaccine development.
- It's also important to remember that researchers were not starting from scratch. Dozens of other coronaviruses provided an essential base for developing a vaccine.
- No steps were skipped or rushed during this process. Instead, many steps were able to operate at the same time instead of in a sequence. Think of this as putting the steps into swim lanes rather than a relay race.

### **What vaccines are available, and how many doses do I need?**

- Different types of COVID-19 vaccines will be available.
- There are multiple COVID-19 vaccines in the developmental and approval process. The vaccines that are currently authorized in the U.S. are Pfizer-BioTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.
- AstraZeneca is also working through the approval process. *(This list will need to be updated regularly. To view an up-to-date list of currently authorized vaccines, click [here](#).)*
- Most of these are given in two shots, one at a time spaced apart. The first shot gets your body ready. The second shot is given at least three weeks later to make sure you have full protection.
- If you are told you need two shots, make sure you get both of them, and make sure you get the same brand each time.
- The vaccines may work in slightly different ways, but all types of the vaccines will help protect you. The vaccines that are currently authorized have been shown to offer a very high level of protection against contracting COVID-19 (up to 95%) and against developing severe disease if you do contract the virus.

### **What is an mRNA vaccine?**

In a mRNA vaccine, the important thing to remember is that no viral particles are injected into your body. The vaccine gives your body the instructions to build a protein that is found on the virus that causes COVID-19. Your body sees that protein doesn't belong, and then begins making antibodies to fight COVID-19. If your body were to someday see the virus, it will remember that protein and know how to destroy it.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan**

There is important information to know about the vaccination plan. First, vaccination is optional and currently, there is no cost to the individual. Second, multiple providers offer vaccine.

Thirdly, the Knox County vaccination plan follows the same plan set by the TN Department of Health. This plan involves a series of phases where priority is given to those more at risk.

- Phase 1a1: Frontline workers and dependent disabled adults
- Phase 1a2: Outpatient healthcare workers with direct patient exposure, including mortuary services.
- Phase 1b: K-12, childcare and other first responders
- Phase 1c: Tennesseans 16 years old or older with high-risk health conditions, and caregivers of children with high-risk conditions.
- Phase 2a: Tennesseans employed in critical infrastructure industries- social services, commercial agriculture and food production, corrections staff and public transit
- Phase 2b: Tennesseans employed in infrastructure industries- transportation, public infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities/energy
- Phase 3: Congregate living facilities including corrections and grocery workers

In addition to scheduling according to the phases, some people were given priority solely based on their age.

However, as of April 5, 2021, any Tennessean 16 and older will be eligible for the vaccine regardless of phase. At that time, if you're 16 and older and would like to get the COVID-19 vaccine, it is open to you.

You may sign up for an appointment on the Knox County Health Department's website, or by calling the Public Information Line, again that number is 865-215-5555. An additional resource is the [CDC Vaccine Finder tool](#), this is a great source to find out other places such as pharmacies or hospitals that are providing vaccinations to those who are eligible.

### **What to expect when getting the vaccine?**

Some people may experience side effects. We know that people are concerned about these side effects, and we understand. Let's take a look at some side effects you may experience after receiving your vaccine.

Firstly, the likelihood of a severe side effect is less than 0.5%. Most people will experience mild side effects such as a sore arm, sore muscles, feeling tired, or a mild fever. Most of these side effects will go away in a few days. Remember, these mild side effects are a normal sign that your body is building protection to the virus. Having side effects does NOT mean you have COVID-19.

Even though you get a vaccination, you need to still wear a mask and continue to practice the 5 core actions (physical distancing, wear a cloth face covering, proper handwashing, clean/sanitize surfaces, and staying home if you get sick). Right now, scientists and experts don't know how long the vaccine will protect you, so this is why it is a good idea to continue practicing the 5 core actions to best protect yourself. Typically, it takes about two weeks after your second shot to have immunity kick in.

### Commonly asked questions

#### **What might be some consequences of not getting the vaccine?**

**Answer:** Not getting the COVID-19 vaccine affects us individually and collectively. Individually, we will continue to wear masks and live partially isolated from those outside of our immediate households, indefinitely. This affects our mental health and overall well-being. Collectively, we may continue to deal with the inconveniences of quarantines, school closures, temporary business hours, capacity limits and other inconveniences that disrupt our normal activities. We will continue to see our healthcare system and healthcare workers overburdened with COVID-19 patients, which makes it more difficult to address other healthcare concerns. COVID-19 will also continue to globally impact our economy as well as strip the wallets of many Americans who are already financially strained.

Not getting vaccinated will keep COVID-19 at the center of our health, welfare and news until we are able to control it.

#### **If I've already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?**

**Answer:** Yes, you should get the vaccine due to the health risks associated with COVID-19. There is no harm in getting the vaccine if you have already had COVID-19. Reinfection is uncommon within 90 days, so you could wait until 90 days after your illness if desired. If currently infected, wait until symptoms resolve to get vaccinated.

#### **How long does the immunity last?**

**Answer:** We are unsure how long protection will last. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. We won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until more data is collected. Long-term protection is being measured in Phase 3 clinical trials (2 years)

#### **Will I get COVID-19 from taking the vaccine?**

**Answer:** According to Viral Immunologist and scientific lead for the Moderna vaccine, Kizzmekia Corbett, the COVID-19 vaccine does not replicate like the actual virus. You cannot get the virus from taking the vaccine. The vaccine alerts your body of what the virus looks like and produces a

snapshot of it. So, when the virus shows up, your immune system recognizes it and is postured and ready to fight it.

**Were the COVID-19 vaccines developed using fetal tissue?**

**Answer:** NO, these COVID-19 vaccines were not developed using fetal tissue. Some vaccines are developed using cell cultures, but current mRNA COVID-19 vaccines were not developed in that way.

**Will the COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?**

**Answer:** The current COVID-19 vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. mRNA is not able to change a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The COVID-19 vaccine gives a "recipe" to the body that is used for a short time to make a protein that is found on the virus that causes COVID-19. The body sees that protein doesn't belong, makes antibodies to the protein, and when the body someday sees the virus it remembers the protein and knows to destroy it.

**Can the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility in women?**

**Answer:** There is no information to support this claim and no reason why the vaccines would cause infertility.

**Is it true that the government is issuing a card to prove someone has received a vaccine which will exempt people from mask and distancing requirements?**

**Answer:** There is no card given to verify who receives the vaccine. A reminder appointment card with vaccine information is given to people when they receive the first dose to let them know which vaccine they received and when to get their second dose.

**Is it true that the COVID-19 vaccine was developed to control the general public through microchip tracking?**

**Answer:** There is no vaccine "microchip." The vaccine will not track people or gather personal information for a database.

**Part 4 – Group discussion (25 minutes)**

**Description: participants will have a chance to ask any questions**

We have reached the end of the presentation. I hope you have found this presentation informative and educational. Now, we want to hear from you. We'll have 20 minutes for additional Q&A. Here is a reminder of the ground rules introduced at the beginning of this presentation.

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- Finally, we ask you to be mindful of our limited time for this presentation so please be succinct with your comments.

#### **Wrap up (5 minutes)**

We have reached the top of the hour, so we are going to wrap up today's conversation. We thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us. Your feedback is valuable to us.