Introduction

This toolkit has been developed with talking points, language tips, social media language, flyers, and trusted resources to help you better communicate with your employees about the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Contents

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Talking Points

- All the available COVID-19 vaccines have been proven safe and effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Getting vaccinated with the first vaccine available to you can help protect you from COVID-19.

- The COVID-19 vaccine development process included several steps comparable with those used to develop earlier vaccines, such as the flu or chickenpox vaccine. The FDA and independent medical experts have ensured that these vaccines are thoroughly and rigorously evaluated.

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses taken a few weeks apart. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, however, is a single-dose vaccine, meaning you only need one shot.

- Side effects are mild, and are normal signs that your body is building protection. Similar to side effects from other vaccines, like a flu shot, they should go away in a few days. Some people have reported experiencing soreness or redness at the site of the injection, body aches, headaches or fever, lasting for a day or two. Severe reactions, or anaphylaxes, are rare. If you have allergies — especially severe ones that include allergies to other vaccines or ingredients in the vaccines — discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your doctor, who can assess your risk and provide more information about if and how you can get vaccinated safely. The Ohio Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are monitoring distribution and any negative reactions to the vaccine.

- There is no out-of-pocket cost for you to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Your provider may ask for your insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid information, because providers can charge an administration fee to insurance. You will not have to pay a fee directly.

- The COVID-19 vaccines work well, but they are not 100% effective. Some people may get COVID-19 even if they've been vaccinated. This is why employees will still need to wear masks, social distance, avoid crowded areas, and wash their hands often.

- Employees who previously had COVID-19 are still recommended to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Data shows it is uncommon to be re-infected with COVID-19 in the 90 days after infection, so they might have some protection (called natural immunity). However, we don't know how long natural immunity might last.

- Employers that encourage vaccines see reduced absences, improved productivity, and improved morale for a safe and healthy workforce.

- Using all the tools available to help prevent the spread of the virus continues to be critical until a substantial number of Ohioans can be vaccinated. Continuing to wear masks and social distance will reduce your chance of being exposed to or spreading the virus. Proper prevention measures, coupled with the vaccine, will provide the best protection from COVID-19.

- COVID-19 vaccines can save lives. COVID-19 is deadly and has killed more than 17,000 Ohioans and more than half a million people across the U.S. *(Data updated March 7, 2021.)*

- Clinical trials that studied the vaccines' effectiveness and safety included a diverse cross-section of people, including communities that have historically been under-represented in clinical research. The clinical studies included participants:
  - From communities of color (42% of Pfizer participants, 37% of Moderna participants, 35% of Johnson & Johnson participants).
  - Older than age 65 (21% of Pfizer participants; 23% of Moderna participants); older than 60 (34% of Johnson & Johnson participants).

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o   With high-risk chronic diseases that put them at increased risk of severe COVID-19, such as diabetes, severe obesity, and cardiac disease (46% of Pfizer participants; 42% of Moderna participants, 40% of Johnson & Johnson participants).

Communication Templates

o   This letter can be sent to your branches, offices, or units to encourage review and use of the toolkit materials.
- CDC: Employee Letter

o   This short newsletter-style blurb can be used in e-newsletters or hard copy newsletters that you distribute to employees. Consider a "special edition" newsletter and add information about who to contact for more information.
- CDC: Newsletter Content

o   Printable stickers for vaccine providers to share with vaccine recipient to wear once they've gotten their vaccine.
- CDC: Printable Stickers

Tax Credit Information

o   The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) allows small and midsize employers, and certain governmental employers, to claim refundable tax credits that reimburse them for the cost of providing paid sick and family leave to their employees due to COVID-19, including leave taken by employees to receive or recover from COVID-19 vaccinations. The ARP tax credits are available to eligible employers that pay sick and family leave for leave from April 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

o   Here are some basic facts about the employers eligible for the tax credits and how these employers may claim the credit for leave paid to employees who take leave to receive or recover from COVID-19 vaccinations.

- IRS: Employers are entitled to tax credits for providing paid leave
- White House Press Release: President Biden to Call on All Employers to Provide Paid Time Off for Employees to Get Vaccinated

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Employee Survey Example

[Company name] is requesting input from employees regarding their intentions to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and how [Company name] may help to facilitate vaccinations for employees. This anonymous and voluntary survey will help senior management make decisions regarding holding a clinic at our office. The results of this survey will not be the only information used in the decision-making process. At this time, [Company name] has no intention of mandating the COVID-19 vaccine.

Do you plan to receive the COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available to you?

- Yes
- No

If yes, where would you prefer to receive the vaccine if given the choice:

- My healthcare provider
- Local health department
- Vaccination clinic at [Company name] worksite
- Other _____

If no, please answer the following:

Would a monetary incentive offered by [Company name] change your mind?

- Yes
- No

Would another type of incentive offered by [Company name], such as paid time off, change your mind?

- Yes If so, what type: _____
- No

Do you have a medical reason for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a religious objection to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Yes
- No

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Would you find it helpful if [Company name] provided employees with resources about the COVID-19 vaccine such as educational information, state/county vaccination schedules and estimated timeframes for vaccination eligibility?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your input. Please return this survey to human resources no later than [date].

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I require my employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine or show proof of vaccination to come to work?

Ohio does not have any mandates for getting vaccinated against COVID-19, but some employers may choose to require it. If you require employees to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination from a pharmacy or healthcare provider, it is important to know that you **cannot** mandate that the employee provide any further medical information as part of their proof.

Do fully vaccinated employees need to wear masks and avoid close contact with others?

The COVID-19 vaccines work well, but they are not 100% effective. Some people may get COVID-19 even if they've been vaccinated. Vaccine studies focused mainly on whether the vaccine keeps you from getting COVID-19. We don't yet know whether getting a COVID-19 vaccine will prevent someone from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people. Until we know more, all employees should continue to:

- Wear masks.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Avoid crowded and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash hands often.

How long does protection from COVID-19 vaccine last?

We don't know yet how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. However, we do know that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If an employee gets COVID-19, they could get very sicvk. They also risk giving it to other employees who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

If an employee already had COVID-19 and recovered, do they still need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends anyone who previously had COVID-19 to get the vaccine. Data shows it is uncommon to be re-infected with COVID-19 in the 90 days after infection, so employees who have had COVID-19 might have some protection (called natural immunity). However, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Employees who **currently** have COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until they feel better and their isolation period is finished, if possible.

Should I stagger vaccination schedules for employees to avoid worker shortage due to vaccine side effects?

It's a good idea to stagger vaccination schedules if you can. Most side effects are mild (tiredness, headache, and muscle pain) and last one to two days. However, some people may get a fever and need to miss work. For vaccines that require two doses, side effects are often worse after the second dose.

Employees who were recently exposed to COVID-19 should wait to get the vaccine until after their quarantine period, if they can safely quarantine away from other people. If there is a high risk they could infect others, they may be vaccinated during their quarantine period to prevent spreading the disease.

Can my organization choose what vaccine to get?

All vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness and hospitalization, regardless of brand. If you host a clinic at your workplace, you will likely only have one type of vaccine available. If employees are interested in getting a different vaccine, they can visit https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/ for a list of vaccine locations near them. They can filter their search by vaccine type to find the best fit. Some vaccines require two doses spread out a few weeks apart. If you receive a two-dose vaccine, be sure to schedule another clinic to get employees back for their second dose, and remind staff to complete the two-dose series to ensure full protection.

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Myths vs. Facts

Myth		Fact	
✗	COVID-19 vaccines aren't safe.	✓	COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.
✗	COVID-19 vaccines were rushed and developed too quickly.	✓	COVID-19 vaccine development and clinical trials were thorough, and thanks to a strategic scientific effort to streamline processes, developed more efficiently.
✗	Vaccines that use mRNA will alter my DNA or genetic makeup.	✓	COVID-19 vaccines will not alter your DNA.
✗	COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility or problems during pregnancy.	✓	There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility or increase the risk of miscarriage.
✗	COVID-19 vaccines will implant tracking microchips in people.	✓	Vaccine injections do not contain tracking microchips.
✗	COVID-19 vaccines will be mandatory for every Ohioan.	✓	Ohio will not make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory.
✗	You can get COVID-19 from COVID-19 vaccines.	✓	COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19.
✗	If I have recovered from COVID-19, I don't need to get the COVID-19 vaccine.	✓	People who have recovered from COVID-19 are advised to get vaccinated.
✗	COVID-19 isn't very serious, so I don't need to get the vaccine.	✓	The severity of COVID-19 symptoms varies widely, and getting vaccinated can help protect you from serious illness from COVID-19.
✗	You will get a positive COVID-19 viral test if you receive the COVID-19 vaccine.	✓	COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests.
✗	Other vaccines, like the flu shot, will prevent COVID-19.	✓	Only vaccines designed specifically to prevent COVID-19 will protect you from COVID-19.
✗	Vaccines cause autism.	✓	Vaccines do not cause autism.

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Language Tips

Recent research from the de Beaumont Foundation finds that certain vocabulary is more persuasive when it comes to the pandemic and COVID-19 vaccines.

More persuasive	Less persuasive
Pandemic	Coronavirus, COVID-19
Face masks	Facial coverings
Essential workers	Frontline workers
Protocols	Mandates, directives, controls, orders
Stay-at-home orders	Lockdowns, aggressive restrictions
Personal responsibility	National duty
Public health agencies	Government health agencies,
Fact-based	Based on science, data, or medicine
Social distancing	Physical distancing
An effective and safe vaccine	A vaccine developed quickly
Getting rid of the virus	Defeating, crushing, knocking out the virus
The benefits of getting the vaccine	The consequences of not getting the vaccine
Getting the vaccine will keep you safe	Getting the vaccine is the right thing to do
A return to normal	Predictability/certainty
Your family	Your community
Medical experts	Scientists/health experts
Research	Discover/create/invent
Medical researchers	Drug companies
Pharmaceutical companies	Drug companies
Damage from lockdowns	Inability to travel easily and safely
A transparent, rigorous process	The dollars spent
Safety	Security
Advanced/groundbreaking	Historic
Vaccination	Injection/inoculation
America's leading experts	The world's leading experts
Skeptical/concerned about the vaccine	Misled/confused about the vaccine

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Promoting vaccination in the workplace

Employers should consider using existing employee communication channels to relay COVID-19 vaccination information. The following channels or tools may be helpful in building workplace confidence in COVID-19 vaccines:

- Company intranet.
- Emails.
- Fact sheets.
- FAQs.
- Meetings.
- Posters.
- PowerPoint presentations.
- Social media.
- Testimonials.
- Videos.

The goal is to reach all employees, so keep in mind information consumption differences between on-site employees, non-wired employees, and remote employees. The following tips could help with communicating to your employees.

Designate a vaccine point person or task force.

Whatever approach your company takes toward vaccination, having someone take the lead in creating a plan and executing it will be helpful. Consider identifying a vaccine coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities.

Create a vaccine plan/policy.

Start considering key issues related to vaccinations and organize a policy making those elements clear.

Where can I find more information?
- CDC: Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine
- CDC: What to Expect After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine article and video
- CDC: Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work
- ODH: COVID-19 Vaccines Myths vs. Facts
- ODH: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- ODH: COVID-19 Vaccination Program for Businesses and Organizations
- ODH: COVID-19 Vaccine Program Guidance for Ohio employers/organizations for vaccinating your employees/members
- ODH: COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Partners For Businesses, Labor Unions and Local Organizations
- FDA: What is an EUA article and video

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Flyers

Signs

Employee Vaccination Clinic

Where:

Date:

Time:

All Ohioans are eligible for the vaccine and that includes YOU!

All COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and have been rigorously tested and proven effective.

#InThisTogetherOhio

#IN THIS TOGETHER **Ohio**

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gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

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Trusted Resources and Links

- Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine website - https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine
    - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about COVID-19 vaccines
    - Myths vs. Facts COVID-19 Vaccine
    - COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines
    - What to know before, during, and after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine
    - Acceptable Forms of ID for Vaccine Appointments
    - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about COVID-19 variants
    - COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Information

- Resources shared by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
    - Plain Language Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about COVID-19 vaccines
    - Getting a Vaccine: What to Know About Me – this form can be filled out by a person with a disability, or their caregiver, to help a provider best serve the patient.
    - Getting a Vaccine: What to Expect
    - Social Story: Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Resources
    - CDC Communications Toolkit
    - Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine
    - Ensuring Safety of Vaccines
    - Different Vaccines

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Social Media

Suggested social media content

Topic	Facebook Message	Twitter/Instagram Message
Safety and Efficacy	All the #COVID19 vaccines available in Ohio have been proven safe and effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Learn more about how these different vaccines work. http://bit.ly/AboutVaccinesOhio	All the #COVID19 vaccines available in Ohio have been proven safe and effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Learn more about how these different vaccines work. http://bit.ly/AboutVaccinesOhio
Vaccine development process and safety	How can you be sure a #COVID19 vaccine will be safe? The @US Food and Drug Administration thoroughly tests vaccines before they are offered to the public. https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/ensuring-safe-vaccines.html [Use "How vaccine safety is ensured from Public Health Communications Collaborative (English)" graphic]	How can you be sure a #COVID19 vaccine will be safe? The @US_FDA thoroughly tests vaccines before they are offered to the public. https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/ensuring-safe-vaccines.html [Use "How vaccine safety is ensured from Public Health Communications Collaborative (English)" graphic]
Booking a Vaccination	The #COVID19 vaccines are available to all eligible Ohioans, including right here at our (insert workplace). You can also: 🌐 Book online: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov 📞 Book by phone: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) #InThisTogetherOhio	The #COVID19 vaccines are available to all eligible Ohioans, including right here at our (insert workplace). You can also: 🌐 Book online: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov 📞 Book by phone: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) #InThisTogetherOhio
Efficacy	The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are safe, effective and available to all eligible Ohioans. Based on evidence from clinical trials, the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective and the Moderna vaccine is 94.1% effective at preventing COVID-19 illness. Get your shot: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov	The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are safe, effective and available to all eligible Ohioans. Based on evidence from clinical trials, the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective and the Moderna vaccine is 94.1% effective at preventing COVID-19 illness. Get your shot: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov
Masking	Wearing a mask has been proven to lower the chance of spreading #COVID19 dramatically. Please continue wearing your mask when you're around anyone from outside your household, even after you've been vaccinated.	Wearing a mask has been proven to lower the chance of spreading #COVID19 dramatically. Please continue wearing your mask when you're around anyone from outside your household, even after you've been vaccinated.

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Topic	Facebook Message	Twitter/Instagram Message
Masking 2	When you're in the office, stay in your assigned workspace and at least 6 feet away from your co-workers. When you must be around your co-workers, please wear your mask. Learn more: https://bit.ly/3asR7Kz	When you're in the office, stay in your assigned workspace and at least 6 feet away from your co-workers. When you must be around your co-workers, please wear your mask. Learn more: https://bit.ly/3asR7Kz
Back to Normal (Video)	The sooner we are all vaccinated against #COVID19, the sooner we can all get back to normal. Schedule your vaccination today. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afh0-nDIy64	The sooner we are all vaccinated against #COVID19, the sooner we can all get back to normal. Schedule your vaccination today. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afh0-nDIy64
Hopeful (Video)	How will you feel once you're fully vaccinated? Hopeful? Relieved? Optimistic? Don't hesitate, vaccinate! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGOEGaiDi_o	How will you feel once you're fully vaccinated? Hopeful? Relieved? Optimistic? Don't hesitate, vaccinate! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGOEGaiDi_o
Eligibility	All Ohioans 16+ are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. That's why we are holding a clinic here at (insert business). Details	All Ohioans 16+ are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. That's why we are holding a clinic here at (insert business). Details
Mitigation Efforts/Spread	COVID-19 continues to spread across our state. Remember to mask up when you're out and around others, keep your distance from those outside your household, and get vaccinated. Come to our clinic on (incert details) to protect you and your family.	COVID-19 continues to spread across our state. Remember to mask up when you're out and around others, keep your distance from those outside your household, and get vaccinated. Come to our clinic on (incert details) to protect you and your family.
Vaccination is the key to normalcy	One day soon we'll get to a point where #COVID19 is behind us, but to get there we must vaccinate our communities. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and available to all Ohioans 16 and older. Come to our vaccination clinic at (insert workplace details)	One day soon we'll get to a point where #COVID19 is behind us, but to get there we must vaccinate our communities. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and available to all Ohioans 16 and older. Come to our vaccination clinic at (insert workplace details)
Workplace Spread	#COVID19 spreads easily when we are in close proximity to one another. That's why it's so important our employees get vaccinated as we head back into the workplace. Schedule your vaccination today: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov	#COVID19 spreads easily when we are in close proximity to one another. That's why it's so important our employees get vaccinated as we head back into the workplace. Schedule your vaccination today: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

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Topic	Facebook Message	Twitter/Instagram Message
Workplace Mitigation	When you're in the workplace, remember to mask up, wash your hands regularly, keep your distance from co-workers, and, most importantly, we want you to get vaccinated! We are having a vaccination clinic right here in the office. (insert details)	When you're in the workplace, remember to mask up, wash your hands regularly, keep your distance from co-workers, and, most importantly, we want you to get vaccinated! We are having a vaccination clinic right here in the office. (insert details)

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