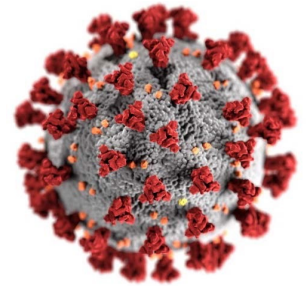


# Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Among Your Patients: Tips for the Healthcare Team

Developed by:  
CDC COVID-19 Response Vaccine Task Force  
June 2021

Updated by:  
Tyanne Conner, MS  
Native Boost, NPAIHB Aug 2021



Vaccinate with **Confidence**

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

# Presentation Overview

- Elements of vaccine confidence
- Strategies for building vaccine confidence
- Strategies for talking with patients about COVID-19 vaccine
- Communication resources



Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnacoe.org/stories](http://www.nnacoe.org/stories)

# Elements of Vaccine Confidence



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)

# Defining Vaccine Confidence

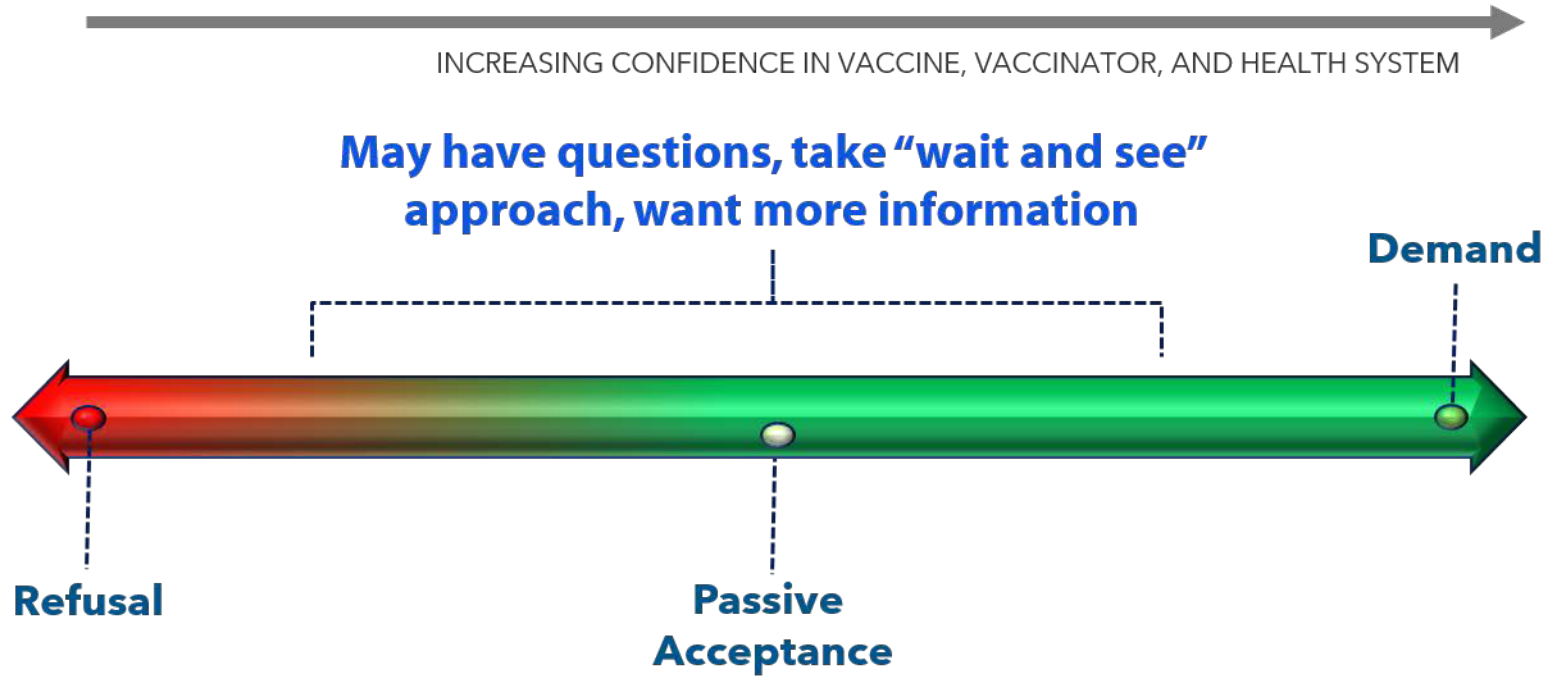
- *Vaccine confidence* is the trust that patients, parents, or healthcare professionals have in:
  - recommended **vaccines**;
  - **professionals** who administer vaccines; and
  - **processes and policies** that lead to vaccine development, licensure, manufacturing, and recommendations for use.



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)



# Willingness to Accept a Vaccine Falls on a Continuum



# Strategies for Building Vaccine Confidence



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)



## A National Strategy to Reinforce Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines

### Build Trust

**Objective: Share clear, complete, and accurate messages about COVID-19 vaccines and take visible actions to build trust in the vaccine, the vaccinator, and the system in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies and partners.**

### Empower Healthcare Personnel

**Objective: Promote confidence among healthcare personnel\* in their decision to get vaccinated and to recommend vaccination to their patients.**

### Engage Communities & Individuals

**Objective: Engage communities in a sustainable, equitable and inclusive way — using two-way communication to listen, build trust, and increase collaboration.**

\*Personnel = All staff working in healthcare settings, including physicians, physician assistants/nurse practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, support staff, and community health workers





## A component of the National Strategy to Reinforce Confidence in COVID-19 vaccines

### Empower Healthcare Personnel

**Objective: Promote confidence among healthcare personnel in their decision to get vaccinated and to recommend vaccination to their patients.**

- Tactics**
- ✓ Engage local health systems and healthcare personnel.
  - ✓ Create a culture that builds confidence in COVID-19 vaccination.
  - ✓ Strengthen the capacity of healthcare professionals to have empathetic vaccine conversations using motivational interviewing techniques.





# Keys to Building Demand for Vaccines

Make vaccines:

- **Accessible** (easy to get)
- **Beneficial** (health benefits outweigh perceived or real risk of getting COVID-19 or perceived or real side effects from vaccination)
- **Convenient** (reduce out of pocket, social, and opportunity costs)
- **Desirable** (appealing)
- **Normative** (presented as a social default)
- **Necessary** (indispensable for accessing things they want to get back to doing)

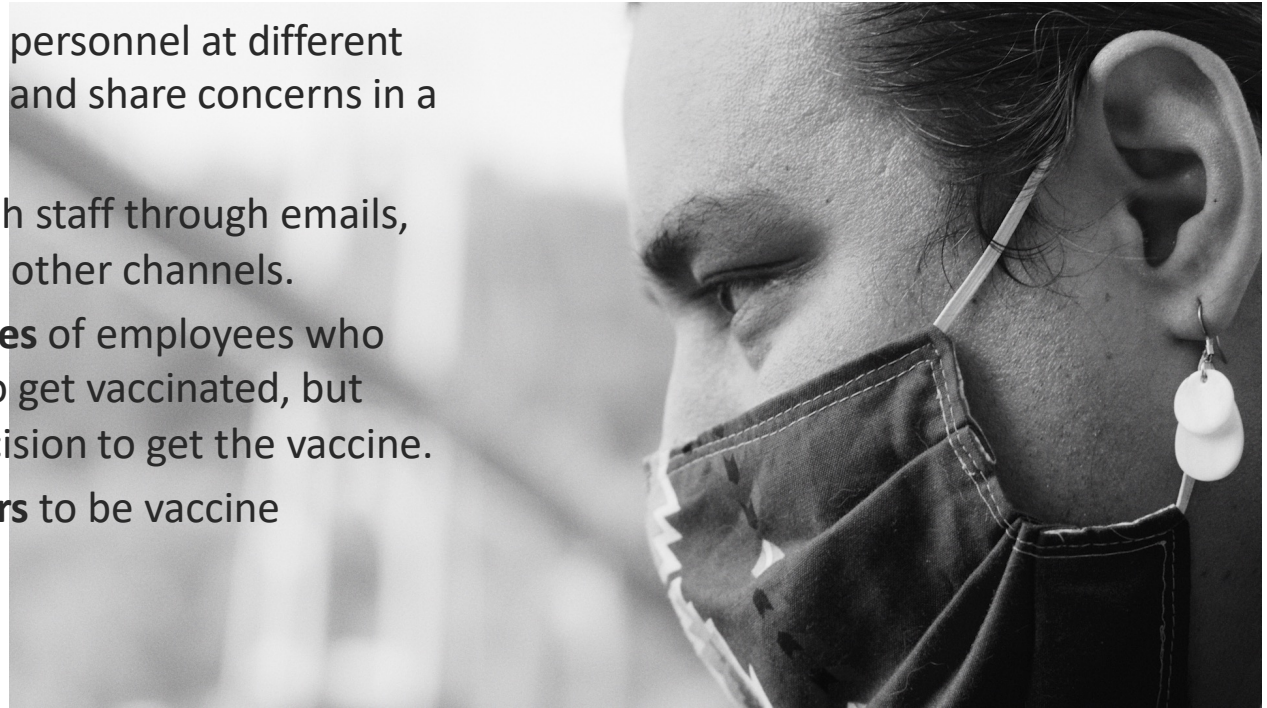


Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnacoe.org/stories](http://www.nnacoe.org/stories)



# Strategies to Build COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Among Healthcare Professionals

- **Host discussions** where personnel at different levels can ask questions and share concerns in a safe space.
- **Share key messages** with staff through emails, breakroom posters, and other channels.
- **Highlight the experiences** of employees who were initially hesitant to get vaccinated, but who later made the decision to get the vaccine.
- **Encourage senior leaders** to be vaccine champions.



Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnacoe.org/stories](http://www.nnacoe.org/stories)



# Talking with Patients about COVID-19 Vaccination



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)

# The Role of Healthcare Professionals

- Healthcare professionals are patients' and parents' most trusted source of information on vaccines.
- Your answers to their questions matter and will help them make an informed decision about getting a COVID-19 vaccination for themselves or their children.
- Your strong vaccine recommendation is the most important part of the conversation.



Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnaco.org/stories](http://www.nnaco.org/stories)



[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/engaging-patients.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/engaging-patients.html)

# Lead with Listening

- Do not make assumptions about whether your patients will choose to get vaccinated or the reasons for their decisions.
  - Instead, begin with an open-ended question, such as “What are your thoughts on getting a COVID-19 vaccination today?”
- Actively listen and seek to understand the patient’s point of view.
- Recognize that these conversations can take time and may continue over the course of multiple encounters.



Source: WeRNative. [www.weRnative.org](http://www.weRnative.org)

# Use Patient-Centered Communication Techniques

- **Use open-ended questions** to promote dialogue. Ask about readiness to vaccinate and what questions or concerns they may have.
- **Paraphrase** any information shared to show that you have heard and understood it.
- **Praise measures already taken** to protect themselves or their children from COVID-19, like mask wearing and physical distancing. Then **frame** vaccination as a safe and effective way to help protect them and their loved ones from getting COVID-19.
- **Ask for permission** to share more information on COVID-19 vaccines. This will foster openness and connection.



# Respond to Questions and Concerns with Empathy

- **Respond to questions** and concerns in a non-judgmental, respectful, and empathic way.
- **Provide accurate answers** using clear, simple language. Explore questions patients ask most often about vaccines (see URLs below).
- Some concerns may stem from mistrust in the medical establishment or the government as result of collective or individual mistreatment and traumas. **Acknowledging past traumas** may promote patients' trust in you and your message.
- **Acknowledge uncertainty** about what we don't yet know about COVID-19 vaccines. This can help build trust.

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/answering-questions.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html)



# Give Your Strong Recommendation

- **Let your patients know** that you recommend COVID-19 vaccination for them. Your strong recommendation is critical for vaccine acceptance.
- **Tailor your recommendation** to include any relevant reasons why COVID-19 vaccination might be important for this particular patient.



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)





# Give Your Strong Recommendation (cont'd)

- **Talk about your personal decision** and experience in getting a COVID-19 vaccine and your experience treating COVID-19 patients.
- **Share the benefits** of getting vaccinated, including:
  - Protecting themselves and others who may be more vulnerable, and
  - Enabling them to get back to activities they have missed.
    - Explain what they can do when they've been fully vaccinated.



Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnacoe.org/stories](http://www.nnacoe.org/stories)



# Examples

- “I strongly recommend you get a COVID-19 vaccine...”
- “...This shot is especially important for you because of your [job/underlying health condition/vulnerable family member].”
- “...I believe in this vaccine so strongly that I got vaccinated as soon as it was available to me, and I recommended that everyone in my family do the same.”
- “I have seen what COVID-19 can do to patients and their families. I want to protect you as best I can from COVID-19 infection and complications.”



# Key Messages About COVID-19 Vaccination

1. You can help **stop the COVID-19 pandemic** by getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
2. COVID-19 vaccines are **safe *and* effective**.
3. COVID-19 vaccines are **free**.
4. After COVID-19 vaccination, you might have some **temporary side effects**. These are normal signs that your body is building protection.
5. Once you are fully vaccinated, you can resume some activities that you stopped doing because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Address Misinformation About COVID-19 Vaccination by Sharing Key Facts



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)

COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.

People who have already gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated.

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy or fertility.

COVID-19 vaccines do not change your DNA in any way.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>



# Help Individuals Find Their Motivation for Getting Vaccinated

- Steer the conversation away from “why not?” and toward the important reasons that matter to them—**their “why.”**
- The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are **most compelling to them personally.**
- You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with family safely.



Source: Native American Center of Excellence  
[www.nnaco.org/stories](http://www.nnaco.org/stories)

# Wrap Up the Conversation

- **Encourage patients** or parents to take at least one action, such as:
  - Scheduling a vaccination appointment with your office, a pharmacy, or another vaccination site, or
  - Reading any handouts that you provide to them.
- If they decline vaccination, acknowledge that this is their decision, and keep the door open to revisiting the topic during future visits.



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)

# It Will Take More Than One Conversation to Change Minds

- Vaccine hesitancy, especially when rooted in **lack of trust** rather than lack of information, is best addressed with **trusted providers** in trusted spaces.
- Encourage two-way dialogue and allow space for people to ask questions.



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)

# Resources



Source: Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/](http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/)



# Sample Email or Letter on COVID-19 Vaccination To Send to Your Patients



Dear [INSERT PATIENT NAME],

I hope this [email/letter] finds you and your loved ones staying safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tremendous disruption in each of our lives. As your primary care provider, I care deeply about your health and well-being. That's why I encourage you to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible if you haven't already. Getting vaccinated can bring you one step closer to enjoying the activities you miss. It is one of the most important things you can do to help protect yourself and your loved ones from this disease. Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

Do you have questions or concerns about vaccination? I want to answer them as best I can and help you make an informed decision. You can call my office at (###) ###-####.

Here are some of my answers to questions I've heard most often from patients:

- **Why should I get vaccinated?** COVID-19 can cause serious illness or even death. There's no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to family, friends, and others around you. COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help us stop the pandemic and get back to normal.
- **Are COVID-19 vaccines effective at preventing the disease?** All COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at preventing the disease. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine will also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- **Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?** COVID-19 vaccines are safe. Over 100 million people in the United States are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, and scientists are continuing to monitor their safety.
- **Will the shot make me sick? Will I have side effects?** You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal signs that your body is building protection. The most common side effects are pain, redness, and swelling in the arm where you got the shot, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea. If you have these side effects, they should go away within a few days. Serious safety problems are rare. But if you are concerned about them, I'd be happy to talk to you.

There are many places where you can get vaccinated, and it's 100% free. You can

- Contact our office to schedule a vaccination appointment. [PROVIDER: Remove this bullet if you do not offer vaccination and consider indicating that in the letter.]
- Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or [www.vacunax.gov](https://www.vacunax.gov) to find vaccines near you.
- Text your zip code to 438829 (GETVAX) or 822862 (VACUNA), or call 1-800-232-0233 to find vaccine locations.
- Call your local pharmacy or visit your local health department website.

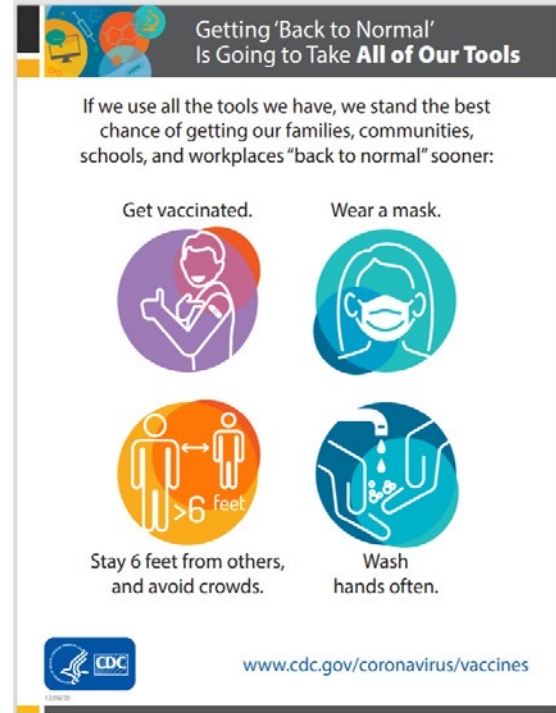
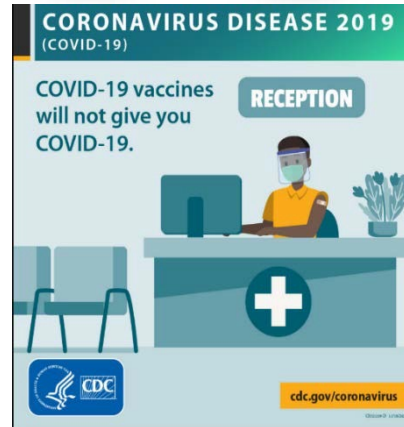
I'm here to answer your questions, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION]

# COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit for Medical Centers, Clinics, and Clinicians

- Stickers
- Social media
- Slides
- Fact sheets & FAQs
- Posters



# Resources for Talking with Patients about COVID-19 Vaccination

- COVID-19 data and vaccination tracker: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>
- Vaccines for COVID-19 – information for patients: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Where to find a COVID-19 vaccine: <https://www.vaccines.gov/>
- Preparing to provide COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/training.html>
- Talking with patients about COVID-19 vaccines: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations)
- Frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>
- COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/vaccines/toolkits/COVID-19-Vaccine-for-Preteens\\_Teens-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/vaccines/toolkits/COVID-19-Vaccine-for-Preteens_Teens-508.pdf)
- Clinician Outreach and Communication (COCA) Call – What every clinician should know about COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness and how to address patient questions and concerns: [https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2021/callinfo\\_030921.asp](https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2021/callinfo_030921.asp)
- Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board COVID-19 Resources: <https://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/>

# Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board Resources

- Stickers
- Social media
- Slides
- Fact sheets & FAQs
- Customizable Posters
- PSAs



## What is Long-Haul COVID?

Long-haul COVID (also called Long-COVID) refers to symptoms that develop, generally, at least four to eight weeks after an initial COVID-19 infection has cleared. They can be new symptoms or reoccurring old ones and can last for weeks or many months. Some researchers have found that people who develop long-haul COVID tend to be younger and initially had very mild or even no symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

### Symptoms

People suffering with long-haul COVID are no longer contagious but still have symptoms of the disease. Some may not have tested positive for COVID-19 because the disease cleared before they developed serious symptoms<sup>2</sup>. Symptoms are often very severe and include extreme fatigue, difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as "brain fog"), shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste, muscle pain, depression or anxiety, and more.<sup>3</sup> Many people with these lingering symptoms have difficulty resuming normal activities, like going to work or school or participating in daily household activities.

### Causes

Experts don't know what causes long-COVID but the National Institutes of Health has launched an initiative to discover causes, prevention, and treatment. Clinics are being set up around the country to treat patients and treatments vary depending on symptoms. Washington, Oregon, and Idaho all have long-COVID clinics. Some researchers estimate about 10% of COVID-19 patients become long haulers, or about 3,300,000 people in the US, currently.<sup>4</sup> But other estimates are higher, such as a recent University of Washington study where approximately 30% of participants reported persistent symptoms up to nine months after their initial illness.<sup>5</sup>

### Protect yourself, your family, and your community

Long-haul COVID is very serious and can affect people of all ages and cases in children are increasing.<sup>6</sup> One researcher has found almost half of children who contract COVID-19 may have lasting symptoms.<sup>7</sup> If you think you might have long-haul COVID, see your doctor to determine the best course of action or treatment for you.

As Indigenous people, it is our role to learn from those who came before us and nurture those who come next. We dance, we pray, we share, we adapt, we protect.

Being vaccinated and having your children vaccinated is the best protection against long-haul COVID!

<https://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/community-resources/>



# Vaccine Safety Monitoring Systems

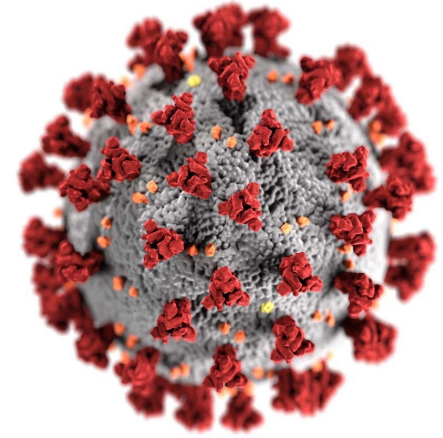
- **Existing** systems and data sources are used to monitor safety of vaccines post-authorization and post-licensure, such as:
  - [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#)
  - [Vaccine Safety Datalink \(VSD\)](#)
  - [Clinical Immunization Safety Assessment \(CISA\)](#)
  - [Biologics Effectiveness and Safety System \(BEST\)](#)
- **New** systems have been developed to monitor COVID-19 vaccine safety, such as [v-safe](#):
  - Active surveillance that uses text messaging to initiate web-based survey monitoring.
  - Provides telephone follow up to anyone who reports medically significant adverse events.



For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[www.npaihb.org](http://www.npaihb.org)

Tyanne Conner, MS  
Native Boost Coordinator  
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
[tconner@npaihb.org](mailto:tconner@npaihb.org)



The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or NPAIHB.