



Vaccination information  
for Natives by Natives

# Vaccine Ingredients



**Our ancestors had limited resources to fight serious illnesses.** As a result, many of our relatives passed on. However, today we have vaccines that work with our body's natural defenses to protect us and others.

This handout is designed to help you weigh important decisions about vaccine ingredients so you can take care of yourself and your community.



“ My father told me we have been through a pandemic before. He said when he was about 3 years old sickness came to the Crow reservation. During this time, my father lost his brother who was just an infant. He told me ‘There was a lot of death, but we survived. Don’t be fearful. Just protect yourself.’ Him sharing that story with me was very powerful. We don’t have much we can control in life, but we can protect ourselves and others. ”

– Lana Schenderline, Elder and Crow Tribal Member

## Vaccines

Vaccines protect us from diseases like the flu and measles. In combination with natural supplements, ceremonies, and traditional medicine, vaccines help us improve our overall health.

## How Vaccines Work

Within our bodies, each of us has warrior cells that stand guard against diseases. Vaccines help our warrior cells see and fight disease. For example, when we get the flu shot, the ingredients in the shot tell our warrior cells how to recognize and fight the flu.

That is why if you get a flu shot, you are less likely to get sick with the flu. Getting vaccinated can also reduce the seriousness of illness if you happen to get sick.

“ Vaccines are not to be feared but to be embraced. Vaccines are a protective warrior shield against the monsters of infection and disease. Slay the monster by getting vaccinated and boosted to keep the healing strength within us and for all. ”



– Michelle Singer, Navajo Elder and Public Health Professional



“ Vaccines are first tested in animals in what are called preclinical studies. Then, they are tested in humans through clinical trials. Phases 1 and 2 of the clinical trials ensure a vaccine is safe. Participants are monitored for side effects caused by the vaccine and the ingredients. Phases 3 and 4 measure the effectiveness of a vaccine and keep monitoring for side effects. However, even after vaccines are FDA approved, anyone can share concerns and potential side effects with their healthcare provider and through the online Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). These important steps help ensure vaccines are safe. ”

– Dr. Naomi Lee, PhD, Seneca Nation, Assistant Professor at Northern Arizona University

## Vaccine Ingredients

Vaccines contain natural ingredients common in the foods we eat, including sugars and proteins.

These ingredients teach your body how to protect itself by calling upon its normal defense systems. For example, some vaccine ingredients make your warrior cells stronger and better able to respond to an attack.

## Protecting Our People

When we are vaccinated, we are less likely to get sick or make our community sick. Vaccines ensure our survival and the survival of future generations to come.

## Where to Get Vaccinated

To get vaccinated contact your local Tribal clinic, IHS facility, or visit a local pharmacy or clinic.

## VacciNative

This handout was developed by VacciNative – a project dedicated to creating accurate vaccine information for Native people by Native people. We do this by gathering info from trusted Elders, Native health professionals, and other experts. All of our materials are reviewed by the VacciNative Alliance, a collaboration of staff from Tribal Epidemiology Centers across the nation.

## Additional Information

For additional information, check out [www.IndianCountryECHO.org/VacciNative](http://www.IndianCountryECHO.org/VacciNative).

For questions, contact us at [VacciNative@npaihb.org](mailto:VacciNative@npaihb.org).

“ As a Crow Tribal member, we did lose a lot of Elderly during the COVID pandemic, especially before vaccines... Now, we are social gathering, and we are lost without these Elders... When we get vaccinated, we are protecting our Elderly and our culture. We have to protect our people. And vaccines do help with that. Even if your body is strong, it's still important to get vaccinated. ”

– Lana Schenderline, Elder and Crow Tribal Member

