



Vaccination information
for Natives by Natives

COVID-19 Vaccine



We have many ways to optimize our health and improve our lives. Vaccines are just one way we can protect ourselves from serious illnesses, like COVID-19 and the impacts of long COVID.

This handout is designed to help you understand COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines, so you can take care of yourself, your family, and your community.



“ 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 and healthy, it’s still important to get vaccinated. ”

– Lana Schenderline, Elder and Crow Tribal Member

Common COVID-19 Symptoms

COVID-19 is a virus that attacks your whole body and causes some or all of these:



Fever



Headaches



Congestion



Cough



Shortness of breath



Sore throat



Loss of taste and smell

COVID-19 can also result in hospitalization and death, especially for those more vulnerable, like people with certain medical conditions and Elders. It can also result in a range of ongoing health problems – including long COVID - that can last weeks, months, or even years.

How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 spreads through droplets in the air when a person with the virus coughs, sneezes, speaks, sings, or breathes. It can also spread through objects someone with the virus touches, sneezes, or coughs on. The virus can enter your body when you touch these objects and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes.



“ Vaccines are just one type of medicine we have to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. The COVID-19 vaccines allow me to safely be around my family, friends, and the Elders in my life. ”

– Dr. Lakota Scott, Naturopathic Doctor, Diné

How to Protect Yourself

To be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you need to complete the vaccine series and get boosted. For most people, the vaccine series consists of two shots. You get the first shot, then the second one about 25 days later. Five months after completing the vaccine series, you get boosted. We may also need additional boosters after that. Why? Booster shots contain the most up-to-date instructions for fighting against the latest versions of COVID-19.

How the Shots Work

Within our bodies, each of us has warrior cells that stand guard and attack diseases. When we get the COVID-19 shots, the ingredients tell our warrior cells how to recognize and fight COVID-19. That is why if you get the COVID-19 vaccine series and get boosted, you are less likely to get sick with COVID-19. It can also reduce the seriousness of illness if you happen to get sick.

Shot Side Effects

You may experience side effects from the COVID-19 shots. This does not mean you are getting sick with COVID-19. Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days. Mild side effects are a good sign that your warrior cells are preparing to recognize and fight COVID-19.

Common side effects of the COVID-19 shots include:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where you got the shot
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Muscle aches

Shot Safety

Millions of Americans have safely received the COVID-19 shots. This includes American Indians and Alaska Natives. Like all vaccines in the U.S., the COVID-19 shots are monitored for safety.

Who Should Get Vaccinated

Generally, anyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against COVID-19, including pregnant people. For more information, talk to your provider.

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, including info on Long COVID, check out www.IndianCountryECHO.org/VacciNative.

For questions, contact us at VacciNative@npaihb.org.

“ We work together, using modern and traditional medicines to help keep our tribe safe from COVID-19. I got vaccinated to protect my family, my tribe, and I from COVID-19. COVID vaccines are safe, and the benefits of getting a COVID vaccine outweigh the risk of getting COVID-19 infection. ”



– Dr. Frank Animikwam MD, LTBB Odawa Citizen, LTBB Odawa Indians Tribe Clinic, Medical Director and Family Medicine Physician

