

Best Practices for Increasing COVID-19 Vaccination Rates on University Campuses

It is not vaccines, but the act of vaccinating, that saves lives. Safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 have been developed, but if the vaccines are not given it will not matter how much time, effort, and money went into developing them. It is important to instill confidence and provide clear and evidence-based information on COVID-19 vaccines to empower your employees and students to make informed and educated decisions regarding vaccination.

Tips on how to encourage vaccine uptake on your campus.

It is important that campuses take an active role in promoting and/or providing COVID-19 vaccines to faculty, staff, and students.

- **Engage students to help promote COVID-19 vaccination on campus and in their communities.**
 - Empower students to promote vaccination among their peers.
 - Include students in the creation and implementation of campus vaccination campaigns.
 - Designate “vaccine ambassadors” or students that are educated on COVID-19 vaccine that can champion and encourage vaccination on campus and in their communities.
 - Encourage students in health career studies or communications to promote vaccination.
 - Create competitions for highest vaccination rates by sports team, residence hall, Greek house, student organization, etc.
- **Consider hosting a vaccination clinic on your campus.**
 - Contact your local public health department, healthcare system, or a local pharmacy to see what your options are for providing vaccinations on campus.
 - Provide vaccination through your college health center.
 - Promote and offer the vaccination in convenient locations on your campus.
 - Provide transportation to or offer free parking for students living off campus coming to vaccination clinics.
 - Provide incentives (e.g., free dining tickets, free food, gift cards, sign up for entry into a drawing, or a tangible item like a t-shirt or highlighter for getting vaccinated).
- **If hosting a vaccination clinic at your campus is not possible, provide guidance on where and how students, faculty, and staff can access COVID-19 vaccine.**
 - Educate faculty, staff and students on their eligibility for vaccine in North Dakota.
 - Provide information on how the campus community can access vaccine in your local area.
 - Support transportation to off-site vaccination clinics.
- **Use promotional posters/flyers to advertise locations offering COVID-19 vaccination in the community.**
 - Display posters about COVID-19 vaccination in student unions, break rooms, cafeterias, and other high-traffic areas.
 - Use multiple platforms for promotion: include print campaigns and digital media.

- **Post resources in campus communications.**
 - Post articles (e.g. newsletters, intranet, emails, portals) about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and where to get the vaccine in the community.

Emphasize the benefits of vaccinating against COVID-19

Campuses should encourage vaccination for their faculty, staff and students. It is important to clearly weigh the benefits of vaccinating against COVID-19 and the risks associated with COVID-19 infection:

- **Getting vaccinated will save lives.**
 - Your faculty, staff and students are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. By promoting vaccination on your campus, individuals who vaccinate not only protects themselves from getting sick but may also protect their family, friends, and their fellow co-workers from the virus.
- **COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.**
 - As of December 1, 2021, over 460 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered in the U.S. under the most intense safety monitoring in our country's history.
 - The currently available COVID-19 vaccines provide [protection from severe disease and death](#).
 - COVID-19 vaccination has been found to be effective against variants, including Delta.
 - Virtually all COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths are among the *unvaccinated*.
- **Fully vaccinated individuals (starting two weeks post-vaccination) do not have to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.**
- **Side effects from vaccinating against COVID-19 are typically mild and resolve on their own in 1-2 days.**
 - The most common side effects are pain at the site of injection, feeling tired, headache, body aches, chills, and fever.
 - Severe adverse reactions to vaccination are [extremely rare](#).
- **The risks of COVID-19 infection are real.**
 - [New variants](#) of COVID-19 (like Delta and Omicron) spread more easily and cause more cases of the virus, which can lead to more hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19.
 - Young and middle-aged adults now [represent](#) a majority of new cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.
 - The virus can have a significant and long-term impact on your [lungs, heart, kidneys, and nervous system](#).
 - [33%-67%](#) of individuals who tested positive for COVID, but weren't hospitalized from the virus, still experience symptoms up to 3 months later.
 - It may lead to a [6x higher risk](#) of erectile dysfunction compared to those with no history of infection from the virus that causes COVID-19.

- [One in three](#) COVID-19 survivors have suffered from a neurological or mental health condition within 6 months of their COVID-19 diagnoses. To put this into perspective, these conditions were 44% higher after COVID-19 than after the flu.
- In North Dakota alone: 1 in 410 have died, 1 in 120 have been hospitalized, and 1 in 5 have tested positive for COVID-19.

If you are eligible, you *should* get a COVID-19 booster dose

CDC [recommendations](#) state that everyone 18 and older should get a booster shot either when they are 6 months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or 2 months after their initial Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

On December 9, 2021, the FDA expanded the use of a single booster dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for administration to individuals 16 and 17 years of age at least six months after completion of a primary series of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Pfizer's vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccines currently available for the 16- and 17- year-old age group. Individuals who are 16 and 17 years of age should only receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as their booster dose.

The recent emergence of the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) further emphasizes the importance of vaccination, boosters, and prevention efforts needed to protect against COVID-19. Early data from South Africa suggest increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant, and scientists in the United States and around the world are urgently examining vaccine effectiveness related to this variant.

Distribute COVID-19 vaccine resources to your faculty, staff and students

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed COVID-19 vaccine resources that can be used to promote COVID-19 vaccine on your campus. This toolkit has resources for organizations and individuals that want to help increase confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among college students. The toolkit can be accessed at:

- [Toolkit for Colleges and Universities | HHS](#)

The Campus COVID-19 Vaccine (CoVAC) Initiative is a project of the American College Health Association, funded by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of the CoVAC Initiative is to support healthy and thriving campus communities. This requires effective, equitable, and inclusive COVID-19 vaccination strategies to yield high vaccination uptake in students, staff, and faculty. The CoVAC resources can be accessed at:

- [CoVAC Campus COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative | ACHA](#)

Resolve to Save Lives (RTSL), an initiative of the global public health organization, Vital Strategies, has created the Voices of Long COVID campaign to heighten public awareness of long COVID and increase

COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake among unvaccinated communities. Launched on November 16, 2021, the campaign features testimonials from a diverse group of young adults, ages 18-29, who are experiencing persistent health problems from COVID-19. For each story, RTSL has produced a full suite of “evergreen,” royalty-free media assets that you can customize and promote at the national, state and local levels. The Long COVID campaign resources can be accessed at:

- [Long COVID Campaign | RTSL](#)

The NDDoH has developed a one-page handout which discusses why college students should receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The NDDoH handout can be accessed at:

- [Why College Students Should Get a COVID-19 Vaccine | NDDoH](#)