



**ROLL  
UP  
YOUR  
SLEEVES**  
**NEW YORK**

*presented by* **FPWA**



**COVID-19 TOOLKIT FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES**



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## I. ABOUT FPWA & ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES NY



FPWA is a social justice, anti-poverty policy and advocacy organization committed to economic opportunity and upward mobility for all. FPWA has advocated for New Yorkers experiencing challenges and the community based agencies that serve them for nearly 100 years, and has provided grants to help them meet their basic needs. FPWA's member network of more than 170 faith and community-based organizations reaches more than 1.5 million people in New York's diverse communities each year.





## I. ABOUT FPWA & ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES NY

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Roll Up Your Sleeves NY is FPWA's community organizing campaign centered on creating and disseminating culturally appropriate and trusted information to promote vaccine confidence and uptake among vaccine eligible individuals in Black, African, African-American, Afro-Latino, and Afro-Caribbean communities.

To expand our reach in communities of color, FPWA is partnering with the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the National Action Network, three other leading organizations that have been and continue to be at the forefront of vaccine equity and education in the state's Black communities. FPWA is also funding community-based and faith organizations in areas with the greatest need to support COVID-19 vaccine outreach, education, and access.





## II. WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

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Accurate and accessible information is the first line of defense in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The information provided in this toolkit is intended to provide you with the basics about the virus, and the tools available to help combat it. Information based on facts is your best defense in the battle to prevent contracting and spreading the virus to loved ones and others.



***"I took the vaccine because it is the responsible and most effective option available to demonstrate my love for not only my mother and aunt, seniors who live in my same housing complex, but also, my community."***  
--Nikki S., Rochdale Village, Queens

## III. A CALL TO ACTION

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Because the COVID-19 pandemic has most severely impacted Black and underserved communities throughout New York City and across the nation, it is in these communities where information and outreach must be concentrated and shared with urgency. Committed and invested community members like you are needed to act as trusted friends and family who can reach those closest to you with lifesaving information. Our recovery as a city is dependent on as many as possible in your community getting vaccinated and adhering to State and local mandates, as they are made available. Your ability to mobilize others by sharing verified resources will determine whether we confront and eventually overcome the pandemic.



## IV. ARE YOU A “HIGH-RISK” BLACK NEW YORKER?

If you are a Black resident of this city, then yes, you are! The coronavirus pandemic has unveiled many pre-existing racial disparities that keep communities of color and other underserved populations in the bull’s eye of the COVID-19 target. And the aggressive nature of the Delta and other variants on the horizon is a cause of great concern. According to the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker, as of July 29, 2021, of the 2,782,983 African Americans across New York State, 60% of all Black New Yorkers had not received at any dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. We must do better! This is among the lowest vaccination rate for any racial group. According to a July report from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 99% of deaths from COVID-19 infection so far in 2021 were in those who were not fully vaccinated. In New York City, Black populations in low-income communities are impacted by the coronavirus at twice the rate of that of their White counterparts. Other high-risk populations include:



### ESSENTIAL WORKERS

These workers, including, but not limited to food access workers, first responders, medical professionals, home healthcare workers, public transit staff, and childcare workers tend to be more vulnerable to potential COVID-19 transmission scenarios than those with the option of working remotely, in isolated environments.

*A more detailed list of essential workers can be found on the  
NYC Comptroller’s website at [www.comptroller.nyc.gov](http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov).*



## IV. ARE YOU A “HIGH-RISK” BLACK NEW YORKER?

### AGING ADULTS

Older adults are at highest risk of severe illness, or death, due to Covid-19 or its variants. And risk continues to increase with age. For example, people in their 50s are at higher risk for more severe consequences than are people in their 40s. Similarly, people in their 60s or 70s are, in general, at higher risk than those in their 50s. The greatest risk is among those aged 85 or older.



Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may require:

- Hospitalization
- Intensive care
- A ventilator to help them breathe
- The most severe outcome of COVID-19 is death.

[More information can be found at the CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov)



*“I got vaccinated because I am my ancestors’ wildest dreams.”*  
-Brenda J., Harlem

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## IV. ARE YOU A “HIGH-RISK” BLACK NEW YORKER?

### PRE-EXISTING HEALTH CONDITIONS



Adults of any age with underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness or death from the virus that causes COVID-19. Pre-existing health conditions include cancer, obesity, sickle cell disease, type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and heart disease—conditions that are most prevalent among Black persons.

*More information can be found at [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)*

### LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

Many of us can point to a parent, a grandparent, a guardian, or a friend whom we admire for keeping food on the table and making ends meet in one of the toughest cities in the world in which to live. These way makers, and others like them, manage to survive, while enduring difficult conditions faced by those living low income, which means fewer resources and access to the quality care we deserve. New Yorkers living in low-income neighborhoods tend to work outside of the home at a rate higher than the citywide average, resulting in the potential for higher exposure to COVID-19.

**Being part of a high-risk population for COVID-19 infection does not mean you are destined to become infected. And it does not mean that you are powerless**

**to protect yourself from becoming infected. In addition to mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing, YOU have the power to end the pandemic by getting vaccinated.**



## V. REAL TALK ABOUT THE VACCINE

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When we talk about the “the vaccine,” we are referring to the Pfizer-BioNTech, the Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. All three have been approved by the FDA to fight COVID-19 and its variants effectively and safely. They are now available to anyone age 12 or older, FREE OF CHARGE, as a preventative measure against the virus and its symptoms.

**How it works:** The vaccine teaches your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 and helps protect you by creating antibodies in your body without you having to become sick with the virus. And although taking the vaccine is no guarantee that you won’t ever contract COVID-19, it has been proven to lessen the severity of its symptoms and the likelihood of hospitalization or even death! This is also what makes vaccination such a powerful tool in the fight against COVID-19.

**What to expect:** The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two doses, given three or six weeks apart to get the most protection, possibly with a booster shot administered within the following six months, if needed. The Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccine is a single dose vaccine.



## V. REAL TALK ABOUT THE VACCINE

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Like the flu shot, the COVID-19 vaccine is injected into the upper part of the arm using a syringe. And just like with other vaccines, the provider will first sterilize the injection site, inject quickly with what feels like a pin prick, and then place a bandage over the area, which can be removed within an hour. As with any vaccination, common, yet temporary side effects might include pain, redness, or swelling on the arm, and possibly symptoms like those felt at the onset of a slight cold. For more information about the NYC vaccination process, visit [nyc.gov](https://nyc.gov).

### VACCINE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING

Medical experts, scientists, and government health agencies have undertaken in-depth measures to ensure that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe. The vaccine has been authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and a New York State Independent Clinical Advisory Task Force, after having undergone several clinical trials with thousands of participants, including Black participants from various ethnic backgrounds. Here's how the vaccine was developed and tested:



### A SCIENTIFIC HEADSTART

Scientists have known a great deal about coronavirus-related diseases for decades. This means that they had a head-start at gathering the scientific data and information needed to develop a vaccine long before the current pandemic started.

Advances in scientific technologies have also laid the foundation for a COVID-19 vaccine, making it possible for versions of a vaccine to be developed way faster than conventional vaccines.



## V. REAL TALK ABOUT THE VACCINE

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### JOINING A WORLDWIDE EFFORT

Many of us watched COVID-19 severely impact populations across the African continent, the Caribbean, Latin America, and other key areas around the world. The development of a vaccine against the deadly virus immediately became a priority in the U.S. Due to the gravity of the global health pandemic and the urgency behind stopping it, the FDA was able to fast-track the use of resources to test and authorize the vaccine for use. Additional assessments were provided by health experts and agencies to further ensure its safety and effectiveness.



Government agencies, scientists, researchers, and other health partners worldwide worked simultaneously and collaboratively to test, manufacture, and produce a vaccine, without cutting any corners related to safety or effectiveness. Government and philanthropic funding were also poured into the vaccine development process, allowing researchers and vaccine developers access to the resources they needed to test and manufacture a viable COVID-19 vaccine.

*For more information about the New York State vaccination process, please visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine)*

## V. REAL TALK ABOUT THE VACCINE

### REPRESENTATION IN CLINICAL TRIALS



Tens of thousands of diverse populations, including the Black population, participated in clinical trials, which helped scientists assess the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines for a variety of communities. This is important since, for many years, most clinical trials favored White participants, which often meant that minorities, who were most impacted, were underrepresented in critical research.





## VI. SO, YOU DON'T TRUST THE VACCINE

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The reality of Black and underserved communities being disproportionately affected by chronic diseases and experiencing the repercussions of systemic and overt racism practiced in healthcare, government, and all aspects of civic life is not new. It's a documented fact that throughout history, medical experiments were performed using Black



Americans, without their informed consent, despite incredible risks, and often with disastrous results. So, it's understandable that you may feel distrustful at the mention of exposing yourself to new remedies and vaccines. And culturally, it might not be your practice to bypass holistic home cures for what you view as unfamiliar, synthetic ones.

***But, distrust and avoidance of the facts should never be a reason to ignore critical information that can save your life. The Vaccine is safe, effective, and available to all New Yorkers free of charge.***

## VI. SO, YOU DON'T TRUST THE VACCINE

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Change can be scary. This may be your only lived experience dealing with the effects of a global pandemic. So, a level of fear, mistrust, and even belief in conspiracy theories at the onset of the crisis were understandable.

However, today we stand in a different place.

Now, more than a year later, over half a million Americans having died from the COVID-19 virus, more aggressive virus variants loom on the horizon, and safety protocols increasingly require proof of vaccination to engage in what were once routine activities. So, the prevailing question

becomes: If not now, when? The power to overcome the pandemic

lies within your hands. Remain open to and invested in learning about how and why vaccines are playing a big part in slowing down the spread and devastation of COVID-19.



Right now, the vaccine is our best preemptive measure in the fight against the spread of the COVID-19 virus and its variants. Don't let fear, intimidation, misinformation, or superstition keep you from considering real options that can keep you and your family safe. Committing to learning even the most basic facts

about the vaccine can help you make informed decisions about your own health maintenance and the role you play in stopping the spread of the virus within your home and throughout your community.



## VII. SOME FAQs

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***I tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies.  
Do I still need the vaccine?***

Yes. The CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can be infected more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from the virus, it's not known how long this protection will last.

***What are the vaccine's side-effects?***

Just as with other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine can cause mild side effects and symptoms after they enter the body. The most common symptoms include pain or swelling at the injection site, fever, fatigue, headaches, swollen lymph nodes, and chills. According to health officials, these side effects are normal signs of the body's response to the vaccine, and they should go away within a few days. Although there have been reported instances of allergic reactions such as hives, swelling, or wheezing (respiratory distress) after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, health officials confirm these instances are rare and have not been life-threatening.

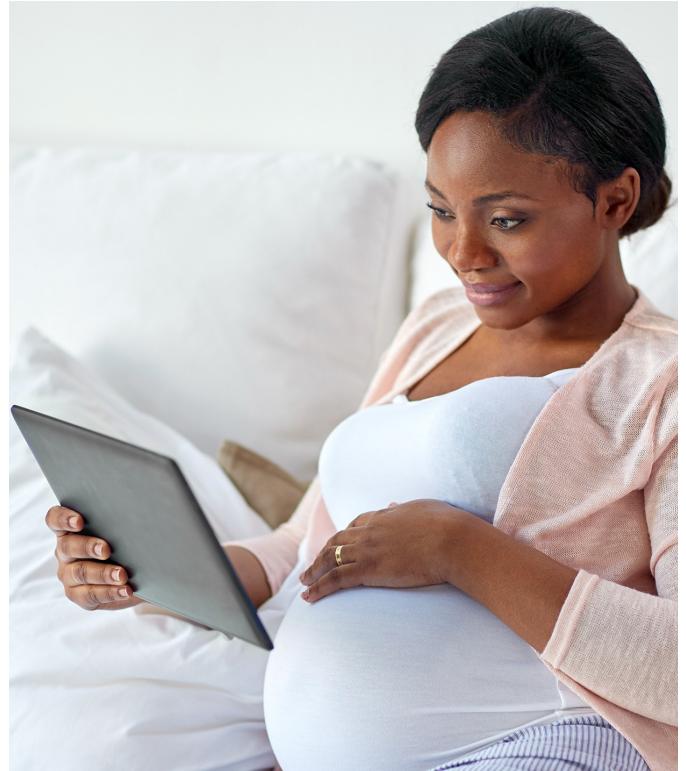


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## VII. SOME FAQs

### ***Is the vaccine safe for children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women?***

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 vaccination has been studied and fully approved as safe and effective for persons 12 of age and older. Studies are underway to ensure safety for younger children.



### ***If I get a COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask and social distance?***

Yes. You will need to continue wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing, and practicing good hand hygiene where required, in accordance with CDC guidelines and mandated State and City protocols. You should wear a mask indoors in public to protect you from the Delta and other variants and from possibly spreading them to others.

### ***Is there a cost for the COVID-19 vaccine?***

In New York State, the vaccine is free for everyone. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged a copay or other fee.

***“The selfish reason: I got vaccinated because I don’t want the coronavirus to kill me. The altruistic reason: I don’t want others to get the virus because of me. I am of better use to myself, my family, and my community because I have done something to be healthy. I.got.vaccinated!”***

***-Erlinda B., Brooklyn***





## VII. SOME FAQs



### ***Do I need to share my immigration status to be vaccinated?***

No. Getting vaccinated is not a public benefit under the public charge rule. When you receive the vaccine, your privacy will be protected. There are strict laws in place to ensure confidentiality of your personal information.

### ***How effective is the vaccine in people with pre-existing immune deficiencies?***

The vaccine is approved for persons with pre-existing immune deficiencies, but you should consult with a healthcare provider familiar with your health condition prior to getting vaccinated.



***“Though I had some hesitancy in the beginning, it did not take me long to decide to take the vaccine. It really is the smartest thing to do to keep the people around you safe. I could not imagine putting my family at risk.”***  
--Courtney H., Rochester

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## VII. SOME FAQs



### *What is “population immunity?”*

“Population immunity,” also known as “herd community” or “community immunity,” exists once enough people in a community are protected from contracting the virus, either because they’ve already had it, or because they’ve been vaccinated against it. Population immunity makes it harder for a disease to spread, and it even protects those who aren’t vaccinated, such as newborns or people who are allergic to vaccines. It is yet unknown how many people must be vaccinated against COVID-19 before a population can be considered protected.

### *What do I need to know about COVID variants?*

Variants are additional strains of the COVID-19 virus, and the Delta variant is currently the predominant strain of the virus in the United States. It is highly contagious and causes more infections and spreads faster than earlier forms of COVID-19, making the cause for getting vaccinated against it that much stronger and more urgent.



## VIII. BE A VACCINE AWARENESS ADVOCATE



Learning about and sharing accurate information regarding COVID-19, the vaccine, and all other prevention methods with family, friends, and members of your community can be lifesaving and rewarding. Information sharing is a great way to stamp out misinformation and fear that often pervades overlooked and underserved communities, hindering access to effective health care. By spreading the word about the vaccine, a proven COVID-19 prevention method, you can become the catalyst that moves someone from the point of being ‘unsure’ or ‘on the fence’ to a place where they feel empowered to take measures to protect their health and the health of their family, friends, and neighbors.



*“I got vaccinated because I didn’t want to find out how serious it would be for me if I got COVID-19, and I didn’t want to put any of my family members at risk of getting sick.”*

*-Donovan W., Bronx & Brooklyn*

## VIII. BE A VACCINE AWARENESS ADVOCATE

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*Some ways you can advocate...*

**One-on-One Conversation:** Whether by phone, text, a digital platform, or by in-person conversation, you have the power to communicate with reluctant or resistant individuals within your network to address their concerns, answer common questions with facts, and provide actionable steps they can take to guard against infection or a more dire outcome.

**Wellness Check-ins:** Ask loved ones, friends, and colleagues if they have a comprehensive COVID 19 prevention plan. If they don't, inform them of all safe prevention methods currently available, and offer to assist with any access needs they communicate.

**Post to Social Media:** Leverage your own social media accounts to spread the message of safe and effective vaccination farther into the community.

**Be Transparent:** Telling your loved ones about the prevention measures you are taking can help to build confidence and inspire action.

**Spread the Word:** Share this toolkit with your family, friends, and community. To them, you are likely a more credible and trusted source than someone less familiar or considered to be less invested. This toolkit contains critical information about the vaccine and its positive outcomes for Black people who have already taken the plunge. As a vaccination advocate, you can inspire friends and family to take a critical step in owning decisions concerning their own personal health.





## IX. FACTS VS. MYTHS



***Myth: The COVID-19 virus was deliberately created and released by humans.***

**Fact:** Occasionally, a disease outbreak occurs when a virus that is common in an animal such as a pig, bat, or bird undergoes metabolic changes and passes them on through contact with humans. This is likely how the newest coronavirus, COVID-19, first evolved. Viruses can morph and change over time.

***Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine will give me the disease.***

**Fact:** The COVID-19 vaccine is not comprised of materials that can cause disease. The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your body how to create virus proteins. Your immune system develops antibodies against these proteins that will help you fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if you are exposed to it.

***Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine will alter my DNA***

**Fact:** The materials in the COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of your cells, which is where your DNA (genetic material) is kept. The cell breaks down and gets rid of the COVID-19 vaccine materials soon after it is finished getting instructions from it.

## IX. FACTS VS. MYTHS

***Myth: The vaccine was developed too quickly and is therefore ineffective or potentially harmful***

Fact: Researchers have been studying and working with vaccines similar to the COVID-19 vaccine for decades. The average timeline for vaccine development is 14 months which we are currently beyond. These similar vaccines have been studied before for flu, zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus (CMV). As soon as the necessary information about the virus that causes COVID-19 became available, scientists began designing instructions for cells to build the unique spike protein into an mRNA vaccine.



***Myth: Vaccination doesn't work because vaccinated people still get COVID***

Fact: Being vaccinated lessens risk of transmission and getting infected, as well as the severity of illness and the risk of death from getting COVID. The rate of hospitalizations among the vaccinated in one study was 1 per 100,000 people.

***Myth: I can't afford the risk of taking the vaccine***

Fact: You can't afford the risk of not taking it. Vaccines can help you stay healthy, avoid serious long-term health complications, and death. In NYC, people who are unvaccinated account for 96% of all COVID-19 cases, 97% of hospitalizations and 97% of deaths. If you can avoid getting sick, you will have more time for your family, friends, and hobbies. Getting recommended vaccines will give you the best possible protection available against several serious diseases and can give you some peace of mind in the process.



## X. CORE TALKING POINTS: COVID-19 & VACCINES

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**Basics:** COVID-19 is a contagious disease that is disproportionately infecting Black and Brown people in NYC and around the country. You matter and must do everything possible to protect your health.

**Preventing Infection:** To prevent contracting the virus, follow social distancing protocols, wear a mask when in enclosed environments outside your home, continue the practice of frequent and thorough handwashing, and safeguard yourself from infection and death by being vaccinated.

**The Vaccine is Safe:** Vaccination is the safest and most reliable way to keep yourself, your family, and your community healthy and safe from COVID-19.

**The Vaccine is Effective:** The COVID-19 vaccine is approximately 95 percent effective and have undergone rigorous safety testing.

**The Vaccine is Equitable:** The COVID-19 vaccine is free and available to all New Yorkers, regardless of race, gender, or immigration status.

**COVID Variants are Aggressive and Deadly:** The Delta variant is one of a few new strains of COVID-19. It is known to cause more infections and to spread faster than early forms of SARS-COV-2, which is the virus that causes COVID-19. According to the CDC, the greatest risk of transmission is among the unvaccinated population, who are more likely to get infected and spread the virus.

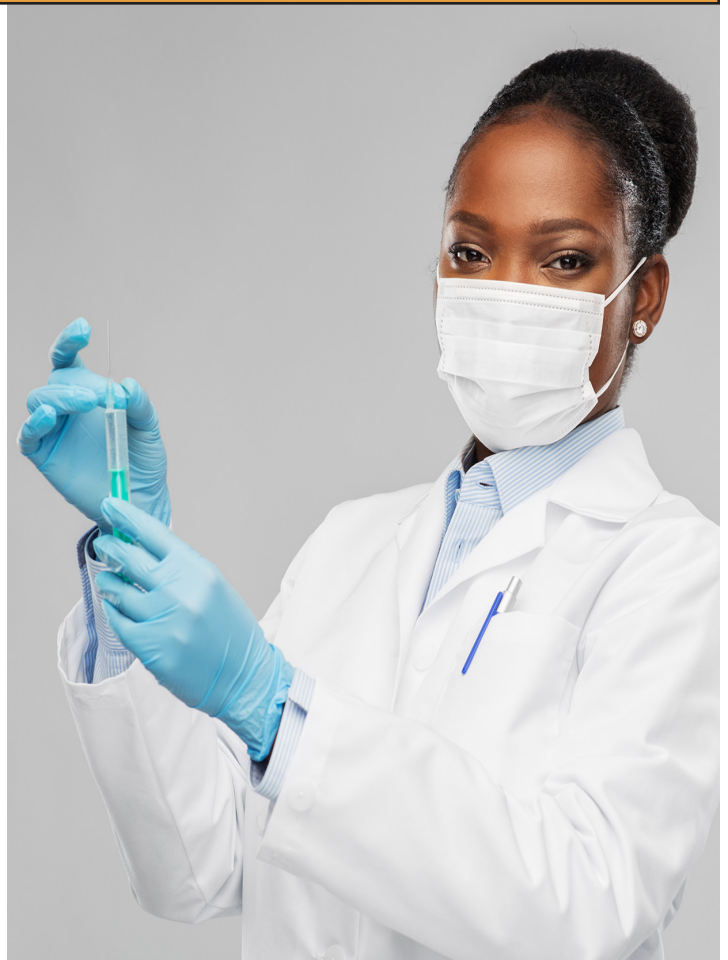
**Take Action:** Building a personalized plan to prevent a COVID-19 infection that is rooted in fact is the best way to ensure your wellbeing during the pandemic. Following the protection and prevention protocols and getting vaccinated, are currently the best defense viral infection.



## XI. I'M READY TO GET VACCINATED

Great! Now is the time to go get your first dose. Persons with chronic health conditions, who are at higher risk of contracting the coronavirus, and anyone who has prior COVID-19 infection should not hesitate, because the vaccine strengthens your immunity to the virus.

If you've already received your first dosage of the vaccine, it's important to return to receive your second dose, especially to protect you against the more contagious Delta variant.



COVID vaccinations are being distributed free of charge at numerous sites throughout New York City and New York State. On the next page, there are seven easy ways to find a vaccination site near you.

*"I got the COVID-19 vaccine for three reasons: I wanted to protect my family, friends, colleagues and other New Yorkers as the vaccine provides 90% - 97% protection against severe disease from all variants, including Delta; as a Haitian American, I am in a privileged position to have access to a free and safe vaccine, especially as my country of origin has only in recent months acquired vaccine doses for mass distribution; I want to do my part in helping Brooklyn and New York as a whole get back to some sense of normalcy."*

*-Hermanoschy B., Brooklyn*





## XI. I'M READY TO GET VACCINATED

- 1 Text your zip code to 438829 or call (800) 232-0233 for vaccine locations in your area. Free transportation to your vaccine site is available to those who qualify.
- 2 Visit the Roll Up Your Sleeves vaccination site locator at [rollupyoursleeves.org](https://rollupyoursleeves.org)
- 3 Schedule an appointment with New York State Department of Health Vaccine Finder at [health.ny.gov](https://health.ny.gov) or call 1-833-NYS-4VAX (1-833-697-4829)
- 4 Schedule an appointment with New York City's Department of Health Vaccine Finder at [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692)
- 5 Visit [www.vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find vaccine providers across the country.
- 6 Check your local pharmacy's website for available vaccine appointments.
- 7 Check for mobile vaccination sites around your neighborhood.



***The COVID-19 vaccines are currently our best defense, both as a personal defense against the coronavirus and as a community defense against its spread. Get vaccinated today!***

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For additional resources, visit

[RollUpYourSleevesNY.org](https://RollUpYourSleevesNY.org)

For the most up-to-date information concerning the COVID-19 vaccine, eligibility and access, visit the websites for the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), [New York City](https://www.nyc.gov) and [New York State](https://www.nys.gov).

The COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Black Communities was developed by FPWA. For more information on FPWA, visit us at [fpwa.org](https://fpwa.org).

This campaign is being funded by the New York State Department of Health, in partnership with the FPWA.

