



National Black Church Initiative

Vaccines are Good for America

Addressing Immunization Disparities in Underserved Communities



VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION

Widespread vaccination can lead to the control, elimination, or even global eradication of diseases. Smallpox has been eradicated, and polio is close to being globally eliminated due to successful vaccination programs.

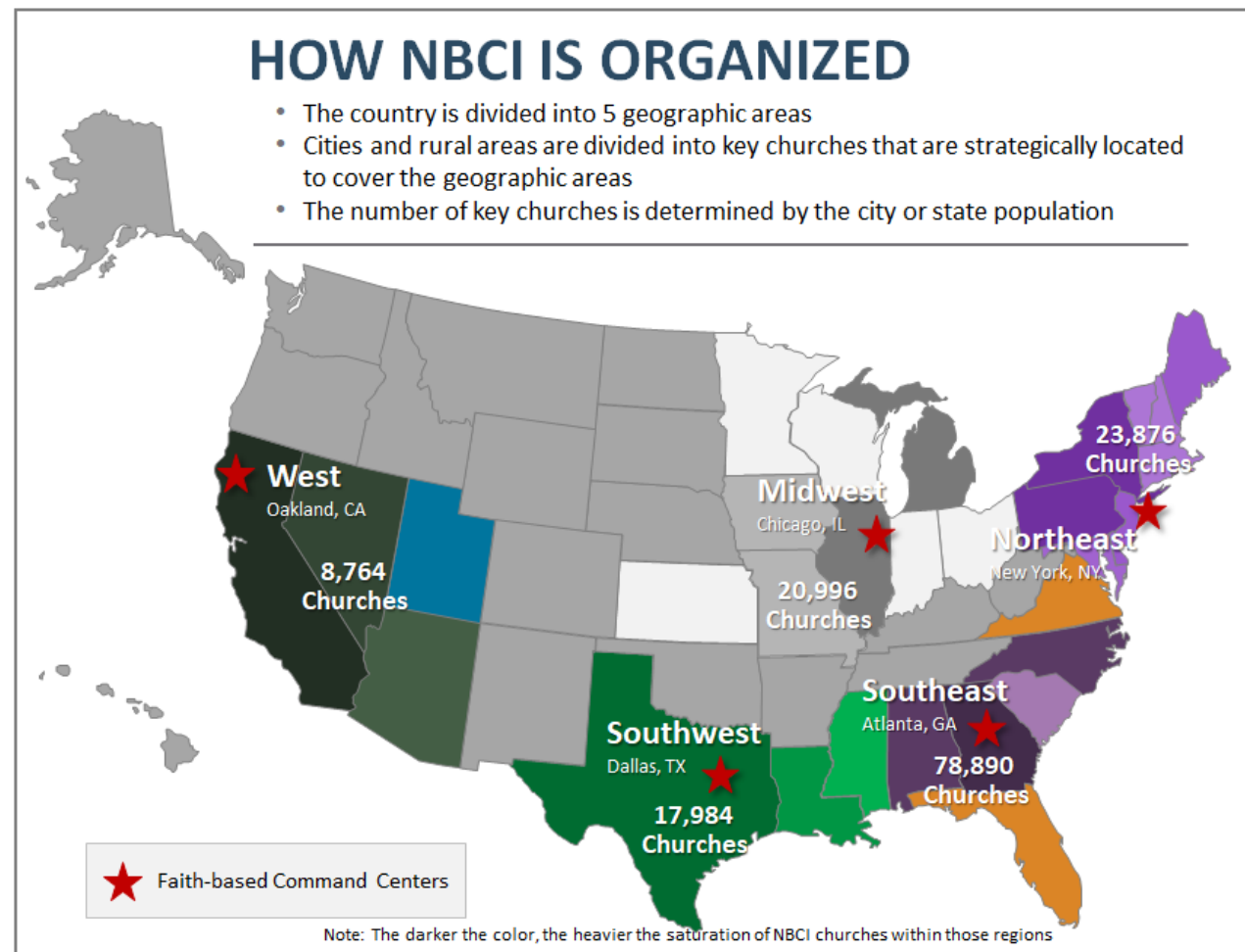


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The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 150,000 African-American churches, comprising 27.7 million members, working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches, and the public. The National Black Church Initiative's methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. We also offer our member congregants and the public helpful, science-based tips on how to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose primary mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box, and cutting-edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. Credible statistical analysis, science-based strategies and techniques, and effective methods govern NBCI's programs.



The Problem We Wanted to Address with Education and Vaccine Hesitancy in the African American Community

1% of underserved patients in a survey (N =3,841) knew their current pneumococcal and/or influenza vaccine status

(A great opportunity to grow pneumococcal vaccine adoption in the African American community. NBCI has a plan)

Increasing Vaccination Rates in Underserved Faith Communities

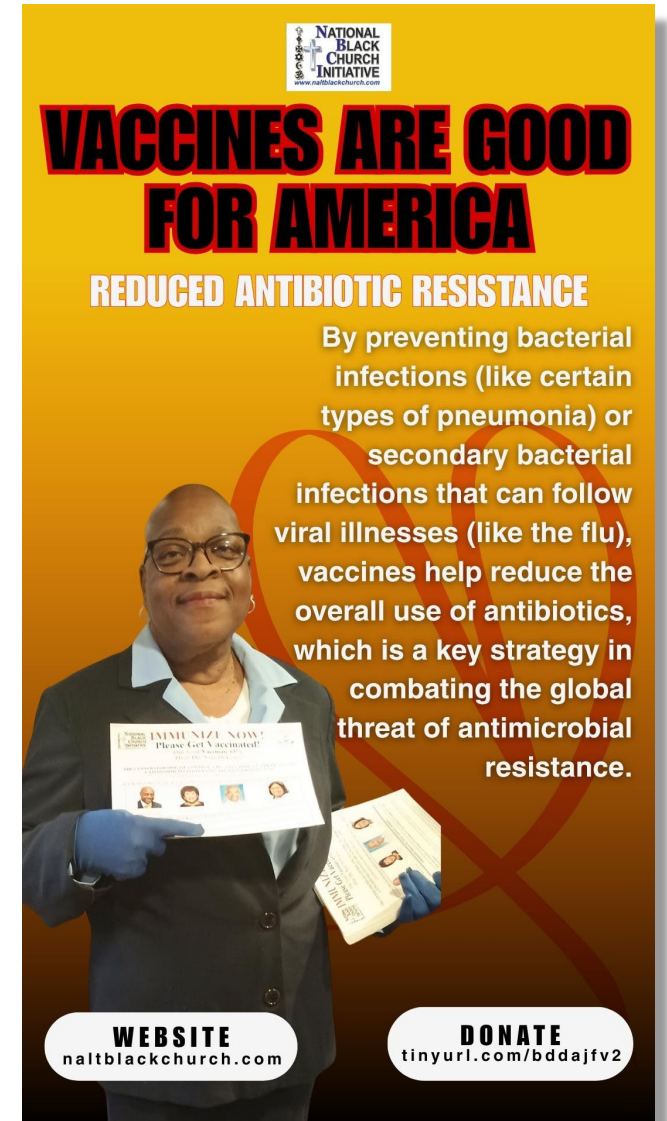
Goal:

- ✓ Address
- ✓ knowledge
- ✓ gaps Dispel myths

Improve vaccine knowledge to address hesitancy

Key Strategies:

- 1 **Identify Barriers & Tailor Messaging** – Stakeholder roundtable to understand vaccine concerns and barriers.
- 2 **Faith-Based Health Messaging** – Develop health sermons and provide faith leaders with evidence-based information
- 3 **Educate and Empower** – Develop vaccine newsletter, host health fairs, develop patient education resources
- 4 **Ongoing Communication** – Launch vaccine newsletter with tear-out vaccine schedules, FAQs, and testimonials.



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VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

REDUCED ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

By preventing bacterial infections (like certain types of pneumonia) or secondary bacterial infections that can follow viral illnesses (like the flu), vaccines help reduce the overall use of antibiotics, which is a key strategy in combating the global threat of antimicrobial resistance.

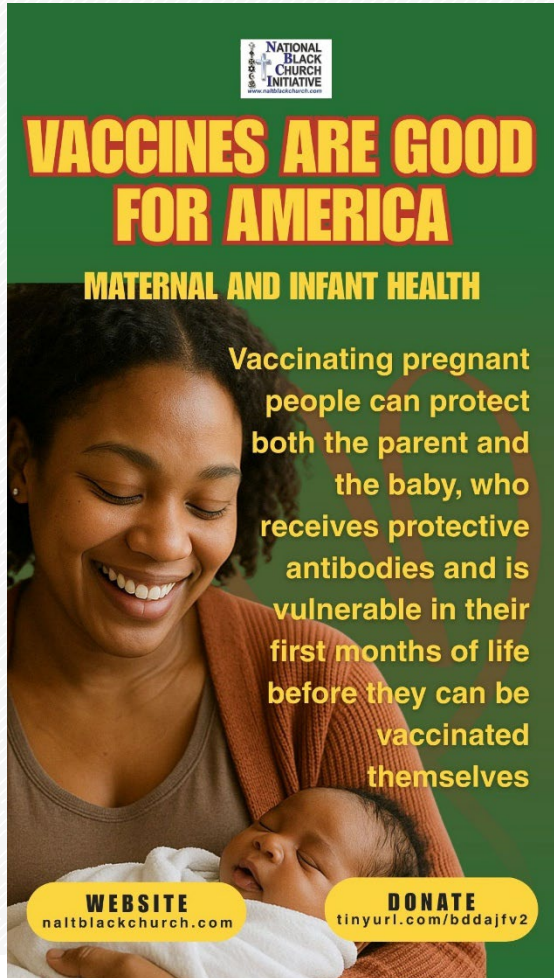
IMMUNIZE NOW!
Please Get Vaccinated!

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Initiative Overview – Vaccination Pilot Program

Addressing
Immunization Disparities in
Underserved Communities



- ❖ Format: A Community Engagement Initiative featuring the following components:
 - Stakeholder Roundtable – April 28, 2025 at the Renaissance Atlanta Airport Hotel
 - Health Sermons
 - Health Information Fairs
 - Online Modules and Downloadable Resources
 - Launching Mid-July 2025
 - Vaccine News Special Edition
 - Launching August 2025
 - Educate on locations where patients can get vaccinated
 - Partner with public health and community networks to get information to patients on where they can get vaccinated
- ❖ Initiative Goals:
 - ❖ Educate patients and community members to reduce disparities and improve health literacy on adult vaccination
 - ❖ Improve vaccination rates for underserved adults by educating them on the data regarding vaccines
- ❖ Target Audience: Persons in underserved communities
- ❖ Outcomes: Engagement and survey data

Data Collected from the Vaccine Demonstration Project

| All Participating Churches | Vaccine Education | Survey Participants | Literature Distribution | Number Vaccinated | Remarks |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Piney Grove Baptist Atlanta, GA | 306 | 153 | 3,568 | 552 | |
| St. James Baptist Church Coconut Grove | 54 | 27 | 148 | 89 | Underperformance as St. James Baptist Church sits in a cluster of a 12 church community. More coordination is needed |
| Co-Op Baptist Church Bronx , NY | 412 | 206 | 4,258 | 758 | |
| Cornerstone Baptist Church Brooklyn, NY | 428 | 214 | 2,706 | 239 | |
| Israel Baptist Church Baltimore, MD | 669 | 398 | 4,882 | 242 | |

| All Participating Churches | Vaccine Education | Survey Participants | Literature Distribution | Number Vaccinated | Remarks |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Dallas, TX | 816 | 408 | 3,982 | 309 | |
| Cedar Street Baptist Church of God, Richmond, VA | 278 | 189 | 1,286 | 199 | |
| Grace Baptist Church, Bronx, NY | 166 | 83 | 1,678 | 74 | |
| The New Life Mission Baptist Church and Ministry Baltimore, MD | 136 | 68 | 382 | 42 | This was a perfect case of vaccine hesitancy in the African American community |
| Gethsemane Baptist Church, Washington, DC | 116 | 58 | 348 | 45 | |

Increasing Flu Vaccination Rates in Underserved Faith Communities



How We Empower Congregants:

- ✓ **Knowledge** – Provide clear, faith-based vaccine education
- ✓ **Confidence** – Equip patients to have informed conversations with providers
- ✓ **Access** – Make vaccines available and remove barriers to access



Next Steps:

- Partner with faith leaders to develop Health Sermons
- Develop and distribute vaccine newsletter to empower patients with knowledge

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VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Healthy children miss less school, which improves their academic progress and long-term economic productivity.

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A vertical poster with a purple-to-white gradient background. At the top is the National Black Church Initiative logo. Below it is the main title 'VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA' in large, bold, orange letters with a blue outline. Underneath is the subtitle 'IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION' in blue. A paragraph of text follows, and a large, faint purple heart shape is visible in the background. At the bottom, there is a photograph of a diverse group of young children. Two white rounded rectangular buttons are at the very bottom, one for the website and one for donating.

Step 1: Educate

Link to Modules, Patient Education, Provider Education,

Testimonials and Resources:



Online Modules

| Webisode | Faculty | Agenda |
|--|---|---|
| Webisode 1: Vaccine Myths and Misconceptions | Otis W. Kirksey, PharmD | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introductions2. Addressing vaccine myths<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Vaccines aren't safe (e.g., vaccines don't get tested; I don't want to be a guinea pig)b. Vaccines cause illness (e.g., I got flu from the vaccine; vaccines cause autism)c. Vaccines aren't necessary (e.g., flu isn't that big of a deal; people should just get sick naturally)3. Take-home message: vaccines are about saving lives and keeping people healthy |
| Webisode 2: What's the Big Deal About Flu Vaccines? | Brittany Feijoo, MSN, FNP-BC | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introductions2. Very brief overview of flu as an illness, mortality rates, potential long-term complications (not too much detail, just to set the stage)3. How flu vaccines work4. Why you need a new flu vaccine each year5. Why people sometimes still get flu even if they've been vaccinated6. Take-home message: flu can be a very dangerous illness, especially for the very old and very young, and vaccines can help us protect ourselves and our loved ones |

Online Modules

| Webisode | Faculty | Agenda |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Webisode 3: Who Needs A Vaccine for Pneumonia? | Paulina Rebolledo, MD, MSc | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introductions2. Dangers of pneumonia (morbidity/mortality, impact on elderly and people with comorbidities)3. What is the pneumococcal vaccination and what does it protect against?4. Who should receive pneumococcal vaccines?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Recommendations for elderlyb. Recommendations for people with comorbidities5. Take-home message: some people are at risk of serious outcomes from pneumonia and the pneumococcal vaccine is for them |

Additional Videos

- Pneumococcal pneumonia survivor Karyne Jones shares her story
- Michele Stevenson shares the story of her son Kaden's experience with flu

Downloadable Resources:

- FAQ on Flu Vaccines
- FAQ on Pneumonia Vaccines
- Resources to Help Get Vaccinated
- Additional resources from Families Fighting Flu

Step 2: Empower

Goal: Empower patients with knowledge about vaccines so they can make an informed decision about vaccination.

CMEO created a vaccine newsletter based on feedback from the Expert Roundtable that was handed out to churches in underserved areas.

Newsletter available in English and Spanish

CMEO printed over 400 newsletters. NBCI reviewed and distributed the newsletters.

CMEO continues marketing availability of the newsletters and we have had over 684 downloads from the CMEO website.

Vaccine Newsletters with Tear Out Vaccine Scheduler

My Adult Vaccine Checklist & Record (FOR PERSONAL USE)

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HPV | All adults up to age 26; some ages 27-45 (ask a HCP) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2 or 3 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Best if given at younger ages, but sexually active people who did not receive the vaccine when they were younger should ask their HCP. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis A | Adults who want protection or have risks (travel, certain jobs, some health, or lifestyle factors) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2 or 3 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask if you travel or want liver protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis B | All adults up to age 59; age 60+ if desired or at risk (kidney, liver, diabetes, certain jobs) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2, 3, or 4 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | For everyone, not just high risk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meningococcal | College students, military, certain health, or travel risks |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 or more |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask if living in group settings like a dorm, military housing, assisted living, group home, or nursing home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIB | Only for special health problems (like removed spleen, stem cell transplant) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 or 3 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Most adults do NOT need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mpox | For those with specific risk factors or during outbreaks |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Most adults do NOT need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polio | Only for adults who were not fully vaccinated as children or need it for travel or work |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 or more |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Most adults in U.S. have had the full vaccination series, ask if you are unsure. |

* Ask your healthcare professional yearly if there have been changes to vaccine schedules.



Why Do I Need Vaccines EVERY YEAR?

- One of the things viruses love to do most is adapt and change to their surroundings – and they can do it fast! That's why the flu shot is needed every year.
- Some vaccines need boosters (an extra shot every so many years) to keep your protection strong.
- New vaccines come out to fight new illnesses (like COVID-19).

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE Vaccines Keep Us Safe

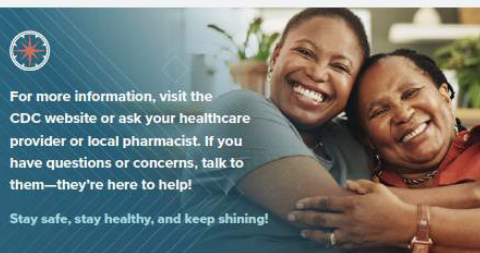
Vaccines help protect you from getting very sick or having long-term problems from certain diseases.

You help protect your family and friends when you get your shots.

Shots are safe, carefully tested, and can save your life—and someone else's.

Even if you get sick, vaccines will help keep it mild and keep you out of the hospital.

Do your part: Check which vaccines you need, ask your health-care professional questions, and get vaccinated to stay healthy, strong, and ready for life's adventures!



For more information, visit the **CDC website** or ask your healthcare provider or local pharmacist. If you have questions or concerns, talk to them—they're here to help!

Stay safe, stay healthy, and keep shining!

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Recommended vaccinations for adults. CDC website. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/default.aspx>. Accessed July 26, 2025.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Immunizations: Religious Health Domestic Guidance. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/long-covid/about/>. Accessed August 1, 2025.
- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Disease prevention toolkit – More resources. NIH Website. <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthcare-self-wellness-toolkit/disease-prevention-toolkit/disease-prevention-toolkit-more-resources>. Accessed August 1, 2025.
- The World Health Organization (WHO). Global immunization efforts have saved at least 154 million lives over the past 50 years. WHO Website. <https://www.who.int/news/item/24-04-2024-global-immunization-efforts-have-saved-at-least-154-million-lives-over-the-past-50-years>. Accessed September 24, 2025.
- Shattuck AL, Johnson IC, Sim SY, et al. Contribution of vaccination to improved survival and health: modelling 50 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunization. Lancet. 2024;403(10411):2307-2316.
- The American Lung Association. The Truth About How Vaccines Prevent Respiratory Diseases and Save Lives. The American Lung Association Website. <https://www.lung.org/factsheets/prevent-respiratory-illness>. Accessed September 24, 2025.
- Purd N, Kocemir F. mRNA vaccines for infectious diseases: advances, challenges and opportunities. Nat Rev Drug Discov. 2024;23(1):83B-861.
- Kulkappala LV, Kouramp L, Kanagala BS, Bhattacharjee P, Bopanna SH. Prospects and Challenges in Developing mRNA Vaccines for Infectious Diseases and Oncogenic Viruses. Med Sci (Basel). 2024;12(7):28. Published 2024 May 22. Accessed September 24, 2025.

BUSTING THE MYTHS

The Real Truth About Vaccines

Let's set the record straight on some things you might have heard.



MYTH: Vaccines aren't tested and "I don't want to be a guinea pig."

FACT: Vaccines are tested very carefully—for years before you can get them. Scientists and doctors make sure they're safe and work well. Even after approval, vaccines are always checked for side effects. You are NOT a guinea pig! Bonus Fact: Many people don't know that mRNA vaccines, like some of the COVID vaccines, are not new—they were in development and tested for over 30 years. That is why they were able to rapidly use the technology so quickly during COVID.

MYTH: Vaccines cause the illnesses they're meant to prevent.

FACT: You can't get the flu from a flu shot, and you can't get COVID-19 from the COVID shot. Sometimes, people feel mild side effects, like a sore arm or a low fever, which is your body building protection. If you do get sick after your vaccine, it might be a different virus, or you might have been exposed before the shot had a chance to work. On average, it takes about 3 weeks for your body to build immunity after a vaccine.

MYTH: Vaccines cause autism.

FACT: Many studies from around the world show that vaccines do NOT cause autism. This claim has been fully disproven by science. The largest vaccine study ever followed 1.2 million children for 24 years and found vaccines do not cause autism or 49 other health conditions.

MYTH: Vaccines aren't necessary, "people should just get sick naturally."

FACT: Getting the "natural" disease can be dangerous or deadly—for you and the people around you. For example, flu, pneumonia, and measles kill thousands every year. Getting the shot is much safer than risking severe illness.

MYTH: "I got the flu even though I had my shot. Was it worth it?"

FACT: This is a common worry. Here's why you should still get your vaccine:

- Sometimes, people catch a different strain of flu than what's in the shot, or get exposed before the vaccine "kicks in."
- Even if you do get sick, the vaccine makes your illness milder—you're less likely to end up in the hospital, have pneumonia, get blood infections, lose limbs, or die.
- The flu and pneumonia shots protect the most vulnerable: grandparents, babies, people with weak immune systems. Your shot helps protect them, too.
- Studies show that flu and pneumonia vaccines save lives every year!

My Adult Vaccine Checklist & Record (FOR PERSONAL USE)

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flu (Influenza) | Every adult, every year (every flu season) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 each year |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Get each fall for best protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumococcal | All adults age 50+; adults 19-49 with certain long-term health problems |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 or 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask which version is right for you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 | When Should Adults Get R? 1 dose for adults 19-64, 2 doses for age 65 or older |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | How Many Doses? 1 or 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Extra Info/Questions: Yearly in the fall. May need more than 1 dose if younger 65 but have specific health issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RSV | 50+ years (always); 50-59 with health risks (ask your HCP) |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask about risks if 50-59 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tdap/Td | 1 dose: Tdap as an adult, then Tdap or Td booster every 10 years; 1 dose: Tdap during each pregnancy |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1+ boosters |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Booster - shot to keep you protected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shingles (Zoster) | All adults age 50 and older |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Even if you had chickenpox as a child, you should get a shingles vaccine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) | Most born after 1957 should get this as an adult if never had 2 doses or aren't sure. |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 1 or 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask if you have never had these diseases or are unsure about your history |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickenpox (Varicella) | Adults born after 1980 who never had chickenpox or haven't had 2 shots |
| DATE(S) RECEIVED | 2 |
| NEXT DOSE DUE | Ask if you're unsure about your history |



¡Las vacunas son buenas para Estados Unidos!

SU GUÍA SOBRE LAS VACUNAS

Protéjase a sí mismo y a su comunidad



Hablemos de las vacunas, esas inyecciones importantes que lo mantienen a usted, a sus seres queridos y a sus vecinos saludables. Revisaremos cómo funcionan las vacunas en un lenguaje fácil de entender, desmentiremos algunos mitos comunes y le brindaremos los datos que necesita para sentirse seguro a la hora de arremangarse.

¿Por qué son importantes las vacunas?

Las vacunas salvan vidas. Son una de las mejores formas de protegerse contra enfermedades graves que pueden enfermarlo gravemente, enviarlo al hospital o incluso causar la muerte. Vacunarse lo protege a usted y a quienes lo rodean, como bebés, adultos mayores y personas que no pueden recibir ciertas vacunas debido a problemas de salud. Esto se llama **protección comunitaria** o **inmunidad colectiva**.



Con el apoyo de una subvención educativa de Pfizer Inc.

¿Cómo funcionan las vacunas?

He aquí una forma sencilla de pensarlo:

Piense en el sistema inmunológico de su cuerpo como un ejército que lo protege de los gérmenes (como virus y bacterias).

Cuando recibe una vacuna, está dando a su ejército " rondas de práctica ". La vacuna no causa la enfermedad real, pero le enseña al cuerpo cómo combatir gérmenes específicos si alguna vez aparecen.

Más tarde, si aparece el germen real, su ejército estará listo. Identifican al enemigo y contraatacan rápidamente para protegerlo. Es posible que usted nunca se enferme o, si le sucede, la enfermedad probablemente sea mucho más leve.

¿Por qué centrarse en las vacunas contra la gripe y la neumonía?

Cada año, la gripe y la neumonía llevan a miles de personas al hospital y pueden incluso provocar la muerte, especialmente en adultos mayores y personas con ciertas afecciones de salud. Estas dos vacunas son especialmente importantes:

1 Vacuna contra la gripe: Consígala cada otoño. Incluso los adultos sanos pueden enfermarse gravemente a causa de la gripe. La vacuna puede evitar que se enferme gravemente y significa perder menos días de escuela y trabajo.

2 Vacuna antineumocócica (vacuna contra la neumonía): Lo protege de infecciones pulmonares graves y de cosas que pueden suceder cuando alguien tiene neumonía y complicaciones como la sepsis (la respuesta extrema del cuerpo a una infección). Es especialmente importante para los adultos mayores de 50 años y para las personas con problemas de salud persistentes.

Barriers: We Had a Few!

- **Timing and Political Climate:** Current social and political dynamics have made vaccine-related education, especially when tied to health equity, a sensitive topic and less receptive in many communities.
- **Increased Scrutiny of Equity-Linked Content:** Educational programs that explicitly address diversity, equity, and inclusion within the context of vaccines are under heightened scrutiny, complicating wide-spread dissemination.
- **Reduced Funding and Research Activity:** Many vaccine experts and researchers that were to be faculty experienced cuts to funding or shutdowns of programs, limiting subject-matter bandwidth and availability.
- **Negative Public Press and Perception:** Ongoing concerns and misinformation about vaccines in mainstream and social media have contributed to mistrust, which dampens openness to educational outreach.
- **Growing Vaccine Hesitancy:** Vaccine hesitancy is rising, particularly in underserved and historically marginalized communities, driven by structural distrust, misinformation, and barriers to care.
- **Competing Priorities in Healthcare Settings:** Providers and care teams remain overwhelmed by ongoing public health demands, workforce shortages, and administrative burden, leaving limited time and attention for vaccine education initiatives.

Thank you for your continued support!



VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

Protection Against Complications

Vaccination helps prevent long-term health complications associated with certain infections, such as:

- Protection Against Liver damage and cancer from Hepatitis B and HPV.
- Protection Against Pneumonia and brain inflammation from measles.
- Protection Against Painful shingles and associated nerve pain from the Chickenpox Virus Reactivation.
- Protection Against Cardiovascular events like heart atPneumoniad strokes, which can be triggered by inflammatory illnesses like the flu, RSV, and shingles.



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Appendix

Strategic Blueprint – Vaccination Pilot Program

Stakeholder Roundtable

Individualizes the needs/gaps of the 10 identified local Black and Hispanic/Latino communities to develop tailored resources with HCP, community leader, and community member feedback

Health Sermons

Presents evidence-based patient education on the importance of vaccination, the appropriate schedule, and solutions to barriers identified by persons in underserved communities. Health sermons provided by trusted HCP congregant members

Health Information Fairs

Addresses access to culturally sensitive information from local advocates and community HCPs in a safe environment to ask questions about science, access, and schedules. Provide a vaccine education opportunities in partnership with public health partners and pharmacies

Online Modules

Reinforces and reminds community members there is a trusted place to find vetted, evidence-based information on vaccines to empower patients and build confidence in discussions with providers

Vaccine News Special Edition

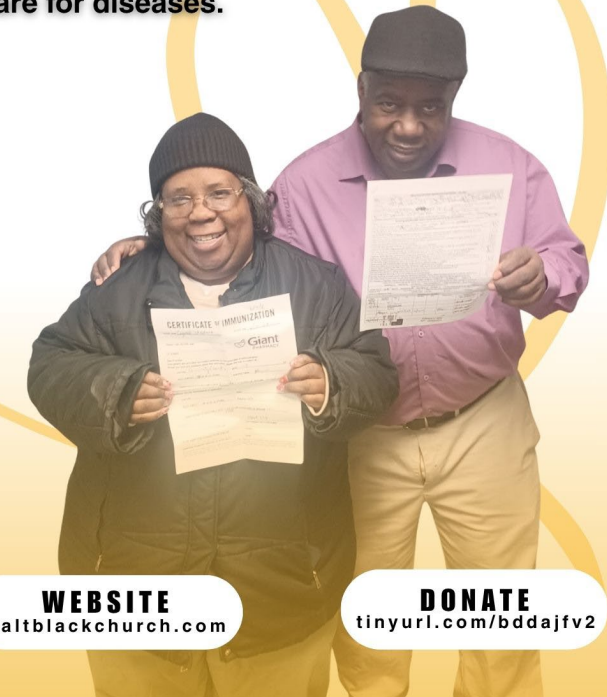
Provides community members with reminders of health information events, access to online hub, quick guide to adult vaccination schedule, and copy of a vaccination diary. Addresses gap in underserved community members that may not have a regular provider or access to vaccination records in one place, by empowering them to manage their records as they access care



VACCINES ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND SAVINGS

Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. It prevents the significant costs associated with medical treatment, hospitalizations, and long-term care for diseases.



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Roundtable Stakeholder Attendees

| Name | Title | Brief Bio | Link | Status |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|-----------|
| Erin Brigham-Gray, MPH, CPHQ | Expert in Quality Improvement & Population Health | Erin is a healthcare professional with expertise in population health. She was previously a population health lead at CareSource and has experience in ministry volunteer work. | LinkedIn Profile | Invited |
| Rev. Anthony Evans | President, NCBI | Rev. Evans has fought tirelessly to reduce health disparities, foreclosure, homelessness and black on black crime as well as promote financial literacy and help to preserve environmental justice across the country. | NCBI Bio | Confirmed |
| Barney Graham, MD, PhD | Founding Director of the David Satcher Global Health Equity Institute Professor of Medicine and Microbiology, Biochemistry, & Immunology Morehouse School of Medicine | Dr. Graham is an immunologist and virologist specializing in vaccine research, currently affiliated with Morehouse School of Medicine. | Morehouse School of Medicine Profile | Invited |
| Brittany Johnson | CEO of Restoring One's Hope of Atlanta, Inc. | Brittany Johnson is a dedicated professional in public health and community advocacy, with a focus on improving health outcomes in underserved communities. | LinkedIn Profile | Confirmed |
| RoxAnn Pena | Patient Advocate | RoxAnn Pena is a mother who advocates for flu awareness after losing her daughter, Reese, to flu-related complications. She works with Families Fighting Flu to educate and support families. | The Pena Family Story | Invited |