



# How to Create Content About the COVID-19 Vaccine

Healthcare marketing teams play a crucial role in educating audiences about the benefits of getting the vaccine. Fortunately, Pew Research reports that the number of Americans willing to get the vaccine is rising. 60% of Americans say they will probably get a COVID-19 vaccine.

However, about 40% of respondents say they would “likely opt out” of a coronavirus vaccine<sup>1</sup>. The content you create could provide the information and reassurance that helps someone decide to get vaccinated.

Here are 9 ways to create empathetic, educational vaccine content for your audience:



## □ Acknowledge Fear and Nervousness

Pew Research also reports that 25% of Americans say they don't have faith in the vaccine research and development process. Meet this group and anyone with vaccine hesitancy:

- **Understand** their worries and respond with fact-based information.
- **Reassure** them by explaining the rigorous testing and approval process. Billions of dollars in government and company funding and previous research on other types of coronaviruses are what helped speed up the process<sup>2</sup>.



## □ Speak to Your Unique Audience

Tap into and address your audience's concerns. If your healthcare organization primarily serves older adults, you may need to tackle different questions than you would for a children's hospital. Here are some audiences that may need unique messaging:

- **Children:** The FDA approved the vaccine for people ages 16 and over. Children have not been included in the vaccine trials yet. Pfizer and Moderna recently expanded their trials to include kids 12 and older<sup>3</sup>.
- **People with allergies:** COVID-19 vaccine trials excluded people with severe allergies. In the U.K., the first country to start vaccinations, 2 healthcare workers had severe allergic reactions to the vaccine. Medical professionals advise people with severe allergies to talk to their healthcare provider before receiving the shots.
- **Black communities:** This community has a history of mistreatment by medical science. Some Black people feel deep mistrust toward medical studies<sup>4</sup>.
- **Pregnant or nursing women:** The CDC advises pregnant or nursing women who want the vaccine to get one. This group was also not included in the vaccine trials, so these women may want to talk to their provider about getting the vaccine.
- **Religious organizations:** Some religious institutions have specific beliefs about vaccines. If your health system treats patients of a particular religion, tailor your message to address their concerns.



### □ Use Plain Language

People deciding whether to get a new vaccine may be in a heightened state of anxiety, which can activate the fight-or-flight response. Readers who feel anxious may have trouble thinking clearly. Medical jargon and complex sentences can add to their anxiety or cause them to tune out. Using plain language is crucial.

- Write in short sentences and use active (not passive) voice.
- The average American reads at a 7th or 8th-grade level<sup>5</sup>, so use the Hemingway App to keep your reading level low.
- Download our [plain language cheat sheets](#) to write about COVID-19.



### □ Involve Trusted Voices

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that from April to September, the American public's trust in the CDC dropped 16 percentage points<sup>6</sup>. There's widespread skepticism toward public health, government and the news media. Trusted individuals talking about the vaccines' benefits can combat that uncertainty and hesitancy. Consider engaging:

- Clergy or religious leaders
- Community leaders and activists
- Healthcare providers and specialists
- Local personalities or celebrities
- Social media influencers
- Word of mouth, through "I got the COVID-19 vaccine" stickers, buttons or social media profile images



### □ Get Specific With the Details

Providing an FAQ sheet about the vaccines is a must. But don't just include general COVID-19 vaccine information. Answer specific, practical questions your audience may have:

- When can I get the vaccine?
- How can I get the vaccine at your health system?
- Will I have to pay?
- What locations will provide the shots?
- How will I know when it's time to receive my second dose?
- Do I need to make an appointment?
- Which COVID-19 vaccine is available?



### □ Remove Barriers to Getting the Vaccine

The goal is to get as many people vaccinated as possible, so make the process easy and straightforward:

- **Include location details:** If only certain locations offer the vaccine, add those details to location pages and pages about the vaccine.
- **Do it online:** Offer online sign-ups.
- **Keep it simple:** Minimize paperwork or extra steps that could turn people off.
- **Avoid scheduling problems:** Don't wait to schedule the appointment for the second dose. Schedule people for the two appointments at the same time, so the two dates are in their calendar.
- **Remind people:** Enroll people in text and email reminders.



### □ Frequently Update Information

Information regarding the COVID-19 vaccines changes by the day. It will continue to be this way as more vaccines are authorized and available to the public. Be sure to:

- Timestamp information.
- Dedicate a group of team members to make updates. Have more than one person responsible for this task to avoid burnout and ensure coverage during evenings and weekends.
- Check search data daily or weekly to see if your audience is searching for new questions you haven't answered yet.



### □ Use Your Platform to Educate

Share COVID-19 vaccine content on all channels available to reach as many people as possible:

- Blogs
- Newsletters
- Posters and pamphlets
- Social media
- Text messaging
- Virtual events
- Webinars



### □ Refute False Information

Inaccurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines has been out there for months. Fake news about the vaccine is bound to increase. Here's how you can fight it:

- Create a social media crisis plan with stock responses for false claims.
- Determine if your organization will delete or respond to false information from social media posts or comments.
- Provide scripts for frontline healthcare workers and medical staff.
- Always respond with facts and kindness.

We hope this guide helps you inform and reassure your audiences. The work you're doing is meaningful and important — and challenging. If you need help creating content about the COVID-19 vaccines, [let us know](#).

<sup>1</sup>Intent to Get a COVID-19 Vaccine Rises to 60% as Confidence in Research and Development Process Increases | Pew Research Center

<sup>2</sup>Years of research laid groundwork for speedy COVID-19 vaccines | PBS NewsHour

<sup>3</sup>COVID-19 vaccine: Answering the most common questions (msn.com)

<sup>4</sup>COVID vaccines will face a deep distrust in the Black community - Chicago Sun-Times

<sup>5</sup>What is readability and why should content editors care about it? (centerforplainlanguage.org)

<sup>6</sup>KFF Health Tracking Poll – September 2020: Top Issues in 2020 Election, The Role of Misinformation, and Views on A Potential Coronavirus Vaccine | KFF