



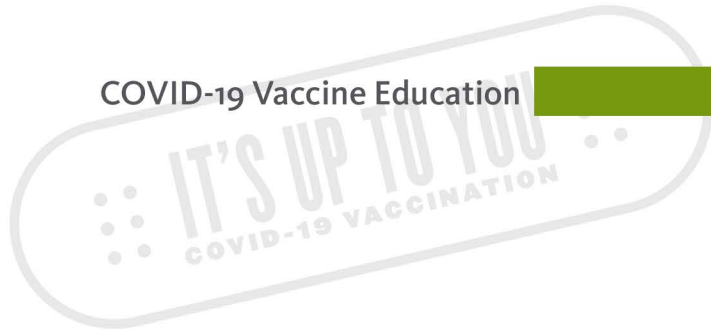
# Black Audience

## Messaging Tips Do's & Don'ts

Across the country, COVID-19 is having devastating effects. Many of us are working on vaccine education programs because we know they can help turn the tide on the pandemic by ensuring vaccine education materials (like newsletter articles and social media posts) use messaging that help Black Americans learn more about the vaccines. Here are some recommended guidelines, based on the Ad Council's research with Black audiences, to use when developing COVID-19 vaccine education messaging.

### COMMUNICATION DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S	DON'TS
Use visual images with diverse representation so readers will see “people like us” – with a variety of body types, skin tones and hair styles.	Rely solely on photos and illustrations that don't represent the diverse population that is part of your community or organization.
Create education materials in multiple languages to reflect the language preferences of your organization's members or the residents of your community.	Solely produce English materials if your neighborhood or membership includes a mix of people whose roots are African or Caribbean and may have limited English proficiency.
Encourage asking questions about COVID-19 vaccines as its empowering and demonstrates self-care.	Frame asking questions as a negative. Many people have valid concerns about COVID-19 vaccines and simply want the answers. Ad Council research showed that Black women, who are often lead decision-makers in households, have a number of questions.
Address frequently asked questions, for example, about pre-existing conditions (i.e. hypertension, diabetes, obesity, lupus) and the vaccines. Information needs to be clear, honest and presented in plain language. Facts about safety are important.	Just say “the science is solid.”
Share that researchers made sure that the clinical trials included adults of diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and geographic areas. They collaborated with faith leaders, community organizations, and health clinics to reach volunteers from many different walks of life across the United States.	Indicate that Black people were not included in clinical trials.
Acknowledge low confidence in vaccines among Black Americans is partly due to concerns about safety and side effects and distrust of government. Also, worries are in part linked to historical unethical practices in medical research (i.e. Tuskegee experiments) as well as systemic health care inequities, especially laid bare by the pandemic.	Simply say Black Americans have lower rates of vaccine confidence without explaining why nor imply that vaccination uptake rests entirely on their shoulders.
Emphasize protecting “those you care for”, “your family” and “the most vulnerable”.	Don't emphasize protecting your country.

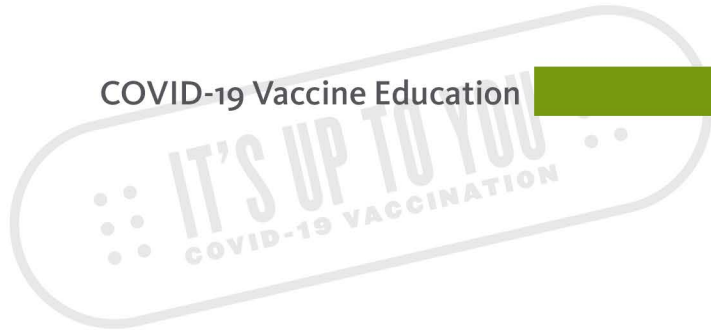


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## Messaging Do's & Don'ts

### LANGUAGE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO SAY	DON'T SAY
COVID-19 and variants ( i.e., Delta, Omicron)	Covid or COVID
“Vaccines” (plural), or refer to “vaccinations” or “immunization” instead.	“The COVID-19 vaccine” or refer to a singular vaccine since multiple vaccines have been authorized by the FDA.
Some people who receive the COVID-19 vaccines may experience some discomfort and mild side effects. This is normal and means the vaccines are working to create an immune response.	The COVID-19 vaccines don't have any side effects.
COVID-19 vaccines or immunization against COVID-19	COVID-19 injection or COVID-19 shot
Adjust messaging as needed based on different vaccines, e.g. “Many COVID-19 vaccines...”  Present vaccines as one important option in our toolbox to fighting the pandemic, i.e. “Vaccines are a key,” or “By getting vaccinated, we help protect ourselves, our families, and our communities”. Mask-wearing and social distancing, will continue to be important.  Other language: “Everyone should continue to use all available tools to help stop the pandemic...”	Don't make blanket statements about how COVID-19 vaccines work, e.g. “COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA technology” or “COVID-19 vaccines require two doses...”  Don't present vaccines as the only tool to ending the pandemic, i.e., “vaccines are the key.”
Get the latest information	There are things we still don't know
Keep your family/those most vulnerable safe.	Keep OUR country safe
Public health	Government
Medical experts and doctors	Scientists



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## Messaging Do's & Don'ts

### LANGUAGE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO SAY	DON'T SAY
People who have questions	Anti-Vaxxers
Everyone should continue to use all available tools to help stop the pandemic not just the COVID-19 vaccines. Other tools, like mask-wearing and social distancing will continue to be important	Present vaccines as the only tool to ending the pandemic, i.e. "vaccines are the key".
Start a conversation with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, peers, co-workers, people you trust or other health care providers.	Use language that implies your organization's role is to help someone decide whether to get vaccinated (i.e. "we can figure this out together")

For more resources to make an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccines visit [BlackCommunityVaccineToolkit.org](https://www.blackcommunityvaccine.org)