



Shots in arms

Leading the way to successful
vaccination efforts

Walgreens

Walgreens



Protecting individuals and our communities



Whether they're protecting against tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap), flu, shingles, pneumonia, or COVID-19, effective vaccines help protect the health of an individual and the entire community. Each shot means that there may be one less person to transmit the disease to those not yet vaccinated.

With the emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, hopes are pinned on vaccines helping us once again enjoy moments with family and friends. But the development of safe, effective vaccines is just one step in the process of getting our communities protected.

More than just a shot in the arm

Together, the battle against the pandemic will be won and the local pharmacy is there to support. Offering services in store or off-site, pharmacies are prepared to meet patients where they are and be a trusted resource for vaccinating children, adults and seniors. But getting shots in arms takes more than just a vaccine and a needle. It takes leadership, trust, experience, and a deep understanding of and a commitment to the community.

A successful rollout of a new vaccine—as well as managing annual vaccination rollouts such as the flu and the continual work to close gaps in care for those who have not yet received recommended vaccinations such as shingles and pneumonia—requires a close working relationship with federal, state and local governments; health organizations; health systems; community partners; and manufacturers. Education with up-to-date information and the latest guidance about the vaccine are vital to building community trust. Proper cold chain storage equipment to keep vaccines frozen, ultrafrozen or refrigerated and clear handling protocols—including how to safely transport vaccines to an immunization site—are crucial to safeguarding vaccine integrity. Additionally, providing convenient access to vaccines and trained vaccinators, as well as ways for individuals to easily schedule an appointment, is a must.



INTRODUCTION

“Yes, we can” is the answer

It’s important to say yes to supporting, collaborating with and helping as many healthcare organizations and community stakeholders as possible to get shots in arms.

But yes is more than just a word. It’s a commitment to forming the right partnerships, using the right technology and leveraging the right expertise to serve the needs of the community. It’s using past experience as a foundation while incorporating new learnings as they happen. As a pharmacy, it’s about working in unison with:

External partners

CDC and federal, state and local governments

- Gain authorization to immunize
- Follow guidance and criteria for vaccine administration (CDC/FDA)

Manufacturers and wholesalers

- Establish vaccine distribution

Health plans and plan sponsors

- Make sure members have access to vaccines

Local organizations

- Reach underserved communities
- Work with healthcare systems and long-term care facilities

Internal partners

Pharmacists, technicians and interns

- Train and support experts who have authority to order and administer vaccinations and provide care to individuals without the need for a doctor’s prescription

Front-of-store employees

- Empower team members to help facilitate the vaccination process
- Engage and remind patients and customers about the need for annual vaccines

Support centers

- Enable the clinical team, operations, program development and marketing to build the program and provide patients and in-the-field immunizers with the tools and resources they need





Walgreens in action

Walgreens is dedicated to finding ways to say “yes, we can.” With a nationwide footprint and trained team members in communities across the country, we’re leading the way in immunizations. Our deep experience enables us to:

- Lead vaccine rollout, distribution and administration efforts
- Incorporate learnings quickly to improve processes and access
- Leverage the knowledge and expertise of our partners
- Support the health and well-being of patients and communities during the pandemic



60,000+

trained immunizers administer
COVID-19 vaccinations, and 27,000
administer all other vaccines¹



15+ years

of vaccine distribution and
administration expertise



105+ million

immunizations administered since 2010*



78%

of Americans live within five
miles of a Walgreens location²

Serving the whole community

Health equity is one of the most complex and urgent challenges facing the nation. Backed by strong public support, the health sector and policymakers are focusing their energies on addressing the challenge.

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people of color and several other marginalized groups. Fueled by gaps in health insurance coverage and uneven access to services, healthcare inequities result in poorer health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

- 27.5 percent of people hospitalized with COVID-19 between March 1, 2020, and May 31, 2021, were Black,³ even though Black people make up only 13.4 percent of the U.S. population.⁴
- Medical mistrust, which may be rooted in personal experiences with prejudice and discrimination, can cause delays in seeking out preventive care.⁵



Walgreens commitment

Walgreens is dedicated to improving health equity and to supporting underserved areas. We have established COVID-19 vaccine clinics in underserved communities and communities of color. We are able to provide broad access to preventive medical services to at-risk populations by being located in areas accessible to many living in medically underserved areas. Also, through our community partnerships, we've expanded our voucher programs, which provide access to flu and other vaccinations, making it easier for people to find and get vaccines. As vaccine availability expands, our multidisciplinary COVID-19 vaccine equity plan will make sure underserved communities and communities of color have equitable access. Our plan to address access and vaccine hesitancy includes:

Education

- Focusing on building trust through education that recognizes and addresses the distrust in communities of color that are disproportionately affected

Access

- Activating our in-store expertise and partnerships in the community to remove barriers to access
- Making sure people around the world receive life-saving vaccinations through programs such as Get a Shot. Give a Shot.®

Information

- Leveraging our pharmacists and their expertise as trusted health partners and resources for accurate information
- Providing factual, easy-to-understand information about vaccines as well as ways to schedule an appointment through interactive voice response (IVR) or touch-tone phone, in store, or by speaking with a call center team member in English or Spanish

Expanding vaccine access through vouchers

Since 2010, Walgreens has distributed more than 1.7 million vouchers for free flu vaccinations for uninsured and underinsured people. We're committed to donating \$5 million worth of free flu shot vouchers in the United States by 2024, with \$3 million worth already having been donated by the end of fiscal 2020. A study shows that a no-cost flu voucher program among uninsured individuals has the potential to reduce influenza-related morbidity, mortality and costs.⁶

- 63.2 percent of pharmacies provided flu vaccinations to patients living in a medically underserved area during the 2020–2021 flu season.⁷
- 52 percent of Walgreens are in socially vulnerable areas.¹⁸

Uber and Walgreens partnership

Walgreens and Uber have teamed up to address access barriers to COVID-19 vaccinations by providing free transportation to Walgreens stores and off-site vaccine clinics in certain locations, which is part of a larger commitment by Uber to provide 10 million free or discounted rides to vaccination sites. As part of our "Ride for All" effort, anyone can schedule a Walgreens vaccination appointment through the Uber app. It's just one way Walgreens proves its commitment to helping increase access to vaccinations in underserved communities.





Vaccination preparedness



When it comes to vaccine education, administration and distribution, pharmacies need to be:

- Adaptable and agile to swiftly pivot processes to address changing demand
- Knowledgeable of the vaccine supply chain and distribution process
- Active in combatting vaccine hesitancy
- Up to date with information and recommendations

Walgreens in action

We understand the need to quickly respond to the continually evolving vaccination landscape. Our adaptability and agility are powered by our:

- Team of experts
- Research, insights and tracking

Our team

Our trained and seasoned team of pharmacists, technicians, interns and front-of-store employees are vital to our vaccination process. They act in concert to facilitate and administer vaccinations—they even help with scheduling, planning and traffic control. Additionally, our fully staffed call center stands at the ready to help people make an appointment or answer any questions.

Research, insights and tracking

The insights gained through research and tracking of data serve as a key driver to meeting changing demands. Our leading-edge technology enables reporting and data integration across the entirety of our vaccination process.

Internal reporting, analytics and tracking helps:

- Focus on targeted populations, such as long-term care facilities and teachers, to ensure that vaccines are distributed to the right places at the right time to benefit priority populations
- Allocate supply and optimize appointment access
- Provide outreach to individuals who live in underserved, vulnerable communities or need help getting their second dose

Research and surveillance allow us to:

- Track COVID-19 vaccinated Medicare members over two years to understand the long-term effects of vaccines through participation in studies
- Explore opportunities that are uncovered by new insights
- Improve messaging, education and scheduling through weekly consumer research panels

Technology and tracking provide physicians and pharmacists with access to state vaccine registries. They also enable patients to:

- Access up to 10 years of Walgreens pharmacy vaccine history
- Get reminder notifications to ensure completion of their vaccine series to gain the full protection of vaccination

Tracking health outcomes

Walgreens has been awarded a \$500,000 research grant through the National Institute on Aging and Brown University to conduct a two-year surveillance study of Medicare patients who received the COVID-19 vaccine at Walgreens. Collaborating with Brown University and CVS, the nonidentifiable pharmacy data will track the health outcomes of the majority of older Americans post-vaccination—the largest study of its kind. By matching data to Medicare medical claims, we will be able to:

- Identify who was and was not vaccinated
- Explore the impact of adverse reactions
- Examine the rate of breakthrough infections—those where a fully vaccinated person later gets COVID-19
- Learn of any interactions of the vaccine and other medications on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

We'll also study the effect of Walgreens intervention programs, such as Save a Trip Refills® and 90-Day Prescription program, on multiple health outcomes.

Positive effect on mental health

73 percent of respondents who received the COVID-19 vaccination reported a positive impact on their mental health, while 67 percent said they felt being vaccinated benefited their physical health as well.[‡]

Supply chain and distribution process

For a pharmacy to get vaccines from point A to point B, it needs a strong vaccine supply chain, a network of distribution centers and a team of seasoned professionals to handle logistics.



Walgreens has conducted 150,000 off-site flu vaccination clinics

since 2015 as well as 70,000 long-term care facility COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

Walgreens in action

Our deep history and understanding of the vaccine distribution process and our robust infrastructure help us get vaccines where they need to be, when they need to be there. Our response to the H1N1 pandemic paved the way to providing immunizations through our national footprint and further established our expertise in the storage, handling and distribution logistics of vaccines.

Logistical experts

Our team of experts cuts through the distribution complexities to get vaccines and all the associated supplies, such as freezers, adhesive bandages and syringes, where they need to be, when they need to be there. Our team has extensive experience maintaining the cold chain throughout the process of handling and distributing refrigerated vaccines and frozen vaccines, as well as refrigerated prescription products, to our immunization sites and off-site locations. The team makes sure that supply meets demand to minimize or avoid shortages that may cause delays in vaccinating patients. Also, by working closely with care organizations and other entities, our team helps people access vaccination sites.

Distribution model

Our distribution model has enabled us to manage and store vaccines safely through a robust infrastructure of refrigerators, freezers and our expanded ultracold capabilities that support special COVID-19 vaccine requirements, including:

Major hubs

- Ultracold freezers
- Dry ice containment
- Dedicated circuits with backup generators
- Six-month storage

Minor hubs

- Dry ice containment
- Increased mobility

Retail spoke locations

- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Community presence that allows us to provide convenient access to care

Combating vaccine hesitancy

Even when a vaccine is proved to be safe and effective, people may be hesitant to get immunized. Underserved populations often have a general distrust from prior healthcare experiences, and individuals may delay or refuse vaccination when approached because they:

- Perceive the risks of the vaccine to be greater than the benefits
- Face language barriers that limit their access
- Mistrust corporations and the government
- Believe false information about vaccines

Walgreens in action

We're committed to combatting vaccine hesitancy through education and information and by providing a safe and easy path to immunization. From the start of the pandemic, 78 percent of Americans believed COVID-19 vaccines would be used before the approval process was shown to be safe and effective.⁹ In addition, 51 percent of Americans said it was not likely that everyone who wanted the vaccine would have quick and easy access to it.⁹ To remove barriers to vaccinations, we:

- Provide factual, easy-to-understand information about the vaccine as well as ways to schedule an appointment in English and Spanish
- Help people keep track of their scheduled immunizations with an appointment reminder
- Assist the elderly or those without internet access with scheduling appointments in store, through IVR or via phone
- Establish partnerships that help people overcome barriers to vaccinations, such as providing free rides to appointments with Uber (in certain cities)
- Provide free consultations in 13 languages to answer any questions
- Support expanded access to vaccines to increase convenience through vaccination clinics in underserved communities

Building trust in our communities

Walgreens knows the community because we are part of the community.

Health Equity Clinics

We plan to host more than 800 off-site clinics in medically underserved areas, primarily at churches and community centers across the nation. As a way to help address access barriers and vaccine hesitancy among the Black community, we held vaccine clinics at local churches in Atlanta so community members would have a familiar place to receive their vaccine and be among trusted friends and recognized leaders. From March 11 through March 13, 2021, Walgreens pharmacists administered more than 7,000 COVID-19 vaccines to community members across the Atlanta metropolitan area.



Mobile Bus Clinics

Our mobile bus clinic offers walk-up vaccinations cross-country, making stops city-to-city.

Some of the cities on our mobile bus clinic tour include:

- Washington
- Atlanta
- Louisville, KY
- New Orleans
- Houston
- Albuquerque, NM
- Phoenix
- Los Angeles
- Oakland, CA
- Portland, OR





Looking to the future



Each day brings new challenges in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. No single entity can overcome the obstacles alone. Pharmacies, government entities, healthcare organizations and all other community stakeholders need to band together and step up to the call of duty for our nation.

For providers, that means:

- Using their close relationships with patients to encourage vaccinations and address vaccine hesitancy
- Ensuring that recommended populations are receiving routine preventive vaccinations

For health plans and employers, that means:

- Establishing COVID-19 vaccination policies and plans to support members' and employees' safe return to work
- Educating members and employees and encouraging them to get vaccinated
- Facilitating access through coverage or via vaccine programs through partners such as Walgreens
- Leveraging partner expertise, resources, education and information

The Walgreens advantage

No matter what the next phase of the pandemic looks like, Walgreens is primed to capture new opportunities and address our nation's needs. We're helping protect families, friends, colleagues and communities by:

Supporting patients

- Increasing access to vaccinations through appointment scheduling online, via phone or the Walgreens App and in stores
- Closing gaps in immunization care for flu, shingles, pneumonia, Tdap and COVID-19
- Providing vaccine education and convenient online eligibility screening forms and appointment scheduling
- Supporting patients in 13 languages
- Accommodating our patients and clients with a flexible, scalable vaccine administration model

Collaborating with partners

- Supporting our partners with insights and information to improve the vaccination experience
- Collaborating with federal, state and local government agencies and jurisdictions to meet requirements for all vaccines
- Acquiring an allotment of vaccines from a jurisdiction for specific entities and ensuring access to supplies so pharmacies can support state and local vaccination needs

Getting shots in arms

- Facilitating off-site vaccine clinics at employer sites, parking lots, community centers or other spaces that meet proper setup and social distancing requirements
- Hosting mass events at stores or other sites across the community for multiple entities to send applicable populations to get vaccinated while meeting state and local requirements
- Initiating additional campaigns to engage and educate customers about COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness, including:
 - Investing in paid media campaigns for widespread visibility and impact
 - Using cutting-edge content to expand digital and physical reach through social media and word-of-mouth
 - Bolstering Walgreens trustworthiness and brand through existing digital channels
 - Connecting expert healthcare partners to amplify outcomes





Working together to emerge from the pandemic

COVID-19 has changed the way we live, play and work. With our nationwide footprint, extensive vaccine experience and pharmacy team members in communities across the country, Walgreens is a key player in helping lead the way through the pandemic.

With a focus on supporting underserved communities to decrease health inequities, we're forming the right strategic alliances, using the right technology and leveraging the right expertise to get shots in arms.

Working together, we can keep our communities healthy, lower medical costs and help enable everyone to once again enjoy moments with family and friends.

*Through May 31, 2021.

†Socially vulnerable as determined by the CDC, which ranks each tract on 15 social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, racial/ethnic minority population and crowded housing.

#Results are from a Walgreens survey of a nationally representative sample of 15,000 people over age 18 who reported getting one or both doses of a two-dose vaccine or one single-dose vaccine. Survey was conducted April 19–21, 2021. Results are based on total sample except where noted.

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► [Walgreens.com/immunizations](https://www.walgreens.com/immunizations)

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