7 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

1. Safety
The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. No steps have been skipped during the rigorous and highly regulated development process. All COVID-19 vaccines were thoroughly reviewed and approved for use by the U.S. FDA.

2. How COVID-19 vaccines work
COVID-19 vaccines do not use a live virus and cannot give someone COVID-19.

3. Benefits
The Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines, each requiring two injections, have been proven safe and highly effective at preventing serious illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19 infection. Scientists do not know if the vaccines actually prevent infection in the first place, but studies are ongoing.

4. Number of doses needed
The first COVID-19 vaccines, from Pfizer and Moderna, each require two shots, and everyone needs to receive both shots to get the most benefits the vaccine can offer. You will still need to wear a mask, practice social distancing and frequently wash your hands after you get the vaccine.

5. Availability and cost
While supply is limited, certain groups (such as health care workers, people living in nursing homes and essential workers) have been prioritized to receive the vaccine first. The vaccine will be offered for free to all who want it as soon as larger quantities become available.

6. People living with HIV
Thanks to people living with HIV who were part of COVID-19 vaccine studies, we know that people living with HIV who are on an effective antiviral treatment aren’t at greater risk for vaccine complications.

7. Medical mistrust
Some people may decide not to take the COVID-19 vaccine at first because of historic and ongoing medical mistreatment of Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities in the U.S. Extensive, community-driven education is needed to address people’s concerns about COVID-19 vaccines thoughtfully and without judgement.