

# Tips for Using Clear, Simple, and Accessible Language: The COVID-19 Virus and Vaccines

Below are a list of common medical and scientific terms that may come up when speaking about both the COVID-19 virus and vaccines. Suggestions for how to explain each term in clear, simple, and accessible language is included to the right of each term.

Clinical/Scientific Term:	Clear and Simple Language:
Acute	Short-lasting but serious
Adverse event	A health problem that happens after the vaccine is given. It may or may not have been caused by the vaccine.
Antibody	What your body creates to protect you from a specific disease; What your body creates after you've received a vaccine in order to protect you from a specific disease; Your body's "army of soldiers" that fight off invaders like viruses and bacteria
Antigens	Bacteria and viruses that can make you sick
Chronic	Long-lasting; Doesn't go away
Communicable disease	A sickness that can be passed from one person to another
Efficacy	How well something works under perfect conditions
Effectiveness	How well something works under "real world" conditions
Exposure	Come into contact with
Herd immunity	When enough people in an area are protected from a disease that it can no longer pass through that community easily
Immunity	Protection from
Immunized	Being protected from a disease/sickness
Immunocompromised	A weaker immune system; More likely to become sick; Less able to fight off sicknesses
Immune system	Your body's system for fighting off disease/sickness
Inactivated vaccine	A vaccine made from a virus or bacteria that has been killed
Incidence of COVID-19	How many new people have gotten sick with COVID-19 in a certain period of time
Incubation period	The time between becoming infected with a disease/sickness and when you start to feel sick
Infectious	Able to spread the disease/sickness to other people
mRNA vaccines	Vaccines that teach our bodies how to create a tiny piece of the COVID-19 virus, so that we can then develop antibodies to fight the virus
Pathogens	Things that cause disease/sickness in people, like viruses and bacteria
Prevalence of COVID-19	How many people total are sick with COVID-19 in a certain period of time
Priority/prioritization groups	Groups who will be offered the vaccine first
Susceptible	Not protected from a disease; Able to get sick
Target	Include
Vaccine hesitancy	Someone is unsure about whether they'd like to get vaccinated (please note the preferred term is the reverse frame of "vaccine confidence")
Variant	Another version of the virus that is a bit different than the one(s) we've previously seen