

Fighting COVID-19 Misinformation for Providers



This resource provides information and resources for providers to support individuals and families who may come across misinformation related to COVID-19.

What is misinformation?

- Misinformation is news, messages, posts, or other **types of information which are not true**. There is a lot of misinformation around COVID-19 on the internet and even on some news and media channels. **It is important to use trusted and evidence-based sources when making decisions about your health.**

How can I tell what is real information versus false information?

- You should use trusted sources, such as official government or health care websites and their social media channels. These websites will often (though not always) contain .org, .gov, or .edu in their web address.

Examples:

- [Johns Hopkins Medicine COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Official Webpage](#)
- [The University of Pennsylvania's COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- Check other information from the source, including links and sources, to see if it appears reliable. If information can only be found in one place, such as a Facebook post or blog, you should be extremely cautious to trust that it is true. You can also search other credible resources to see if they are sharing similar information.
- **Resource Highlight:** [Being a Careful Reader of Coronavirus Information – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
 - This resource provides tips and suggestions for making sure that you're getting the best and most trustworthy information related to coronavirus.

How do I help families and individuals who are coming to me with misinformation about COVID-19?

- The best way to help families and individuals who are approaching you with misinformation about COVID-19 is to provide accurate information and to explain where accurate information can be found. ASERT has developed many resources to answer frequently asked questions about COVID-19 including some of the most common questions below. **You can visit the ASERT resource page at any time to search for information related to COVID-19 or other topics of interest here: <https://paautism.org/resources/>**



COVID-19 FAQ Resources

This resource provides information and resources for providers to address commonly asked questions and concerns individuals and families may have about COVID-19. It is important for everyone to have accurate information to make the best and most informed decision for themselves.

Is COVID-19 really that serious?

- **While most individuals that contract COVID-19 will recover, there is still significant risk of serious infection and long-term side effects.** Additionally, individuals with health concerns or other risk factors face an increased risk of severe infection and hospitalization.
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Health and Safety Guide – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
This resource provides background information on COVID-19, along with a list of trusted sources for information regarding COVID-19.
- **Viruses change and mutate.** COVID-19 has been challenging because of the combination of low vaccination rates and several variants spreading in the community. The current most common variant of COVID-19, known as the Delta variant, is known to be 2x as contagious as previous variants of COVID-19. You can find more information about variants of COVID-19 [in this resource created by the CDC.](#)

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

- **The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.** Over 30 years of research has led to the COVID-19 vaccines and tens of thousands of individuals participated in the clinical trial and tens of millions of people have already received the vaccine.
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Decision Making for the COVID-19 Vaccine – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
This resource, developed by ASERT in collaboration with Dr. Venkat from Allegheny Health Network and Dr. Migyanka from Indiana University of Pennsylvania provides answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine to help individuals make informed decisions.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

- The COVID-19 vaccines in the US do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?

- **The COVID-19 vaccines do not change your DNA.** The vaccines help your body to make antibodies, which already naturally occur in your body when you get sick. The COVID-19 vaccines specifically help your body to create antibodies more effective at recognizing and fighting off COVID-19. [This brief video developed by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services explains more.](#)

Can the COVID-19 vaccine impact my ability to have children?

- **There is no evidence the vaccines affect your ability to have children.** Millions of young adults have been vaccinated and there has been no evidence of fertility issues.

If I am young and/or healthy, do I still need to get vaccinated?

- **Not getting vaccinated puts you at much higher risk of severe COVID-19,** which can make you very sick for a long period of time or even lead to hospitalization or death - even if you're young and healthy. Getting vaccinated helps protect you against these risks.
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Preventing COVID-19 and Monitoring Health – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
This resource provides information on families/caregivers on important things to monitor around physical health related to COVID-19. The resource includes basics of coronavirus, a checklist for monitoring symptoms, and when to seek treatment.

If I am vaccinated, do I need to wear a mask?

- **The Centers for Disease Control recommend that in areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, you should wear a mask in crowded settings and for activities where you may be in close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.** Individual states, counties and even local business/stores may require you to wear a mask indoors. You can track the number of COVID-19 cases in your local area using the [CDC COVID-19 tracker](#).
 - **Resource Highlight:** [I'm Vaccinated, Now What? Social Stories – AID In PA](#)
These social stories are a visual resource providing information for individuals about what they can do once they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Wearing a Mask and Communication – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
As a result of COVID-19, health care providers have recommended people wear masks to prevent the spread of the disease. Wearing masks can be uncomfortable, and for individuals who have sensory sensitivities, it can be even harder. These resources provide a guide for families and caregivers on how to work with loved ones on getting comfortable wearing a mask, different types of masks based on individual needs, as well as information on communicating while wearing masks for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Roadmap and Guide Back into the Community – PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)
This guide, developed by ASERT and SAU-1 for the AID in PA initiative, provides self-advocates with information and questions to help guide discussions about their readiness to go back into the community during COVID-19.

If everyone around me is vaccinated, do I need to get vaccinated?

- **COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people getting COVID-19 and can also reduce the risk of spreading it.**
 - **Resource Highlight:** [Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine Social Stories – AID In PA](#)
These social stories provide a visual explanation of what to expect when getting the vaccine for COVID-19 and what you may experience after getting the vaccine. Social stories are provided in both English and Spanish and have also been developed into videos.