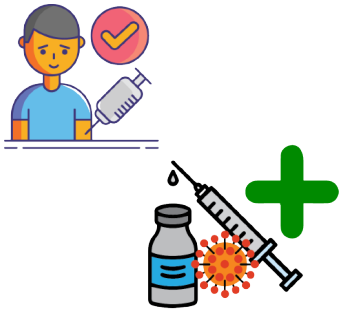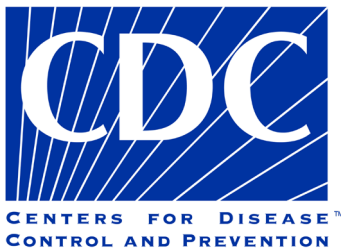**ASAN**

AUTISTIC SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK

Easy Read Edition

What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine and booster shots

Words to Know in this Fact Sheet

Booster

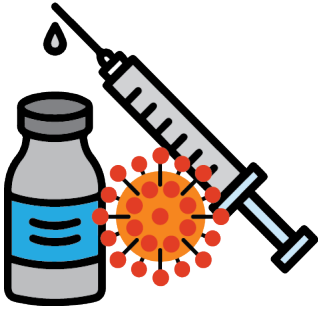A booster is an extra vaccine that you get to remind your body how to fight a germ

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

A part of the government. They make decisions about COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19

A bad disease that has spread around the world. It makes people very sick and can kill people.
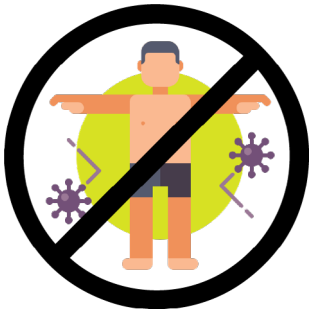
COVID-19 Vaccine

A shot that can keep you from getting COVID-19

High Risk

High risk means someone is more likely to get very sick from a disease. It can mean it's easier for them to get the disease. It can also mean that if they get the disease, it's easier for them to get very sick.
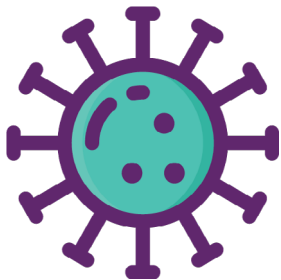
Immunocompromised

When your body needs extra help to stop germs.

Vaccine
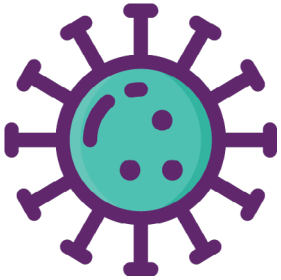
A shot that keeps us from getting sick.

Virus

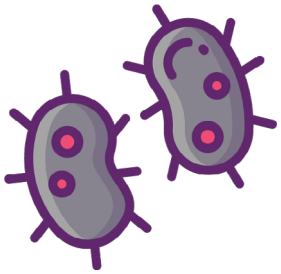A virus is a type of germ that can make us sick. Viruses are very small.
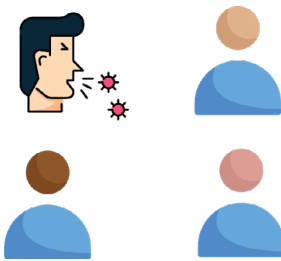
What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a very bad disease.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus.
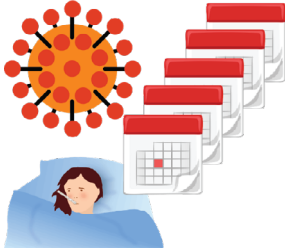
A **virus** is a type of very small germ.

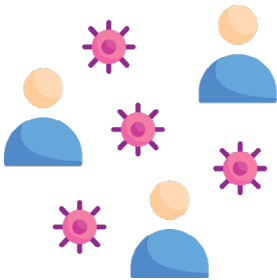COVID-19 spreads from person to person.
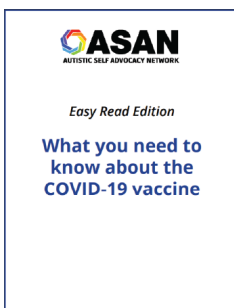
It has made a lot of people very sick.

A lot of people have died from COVID-19.

A lot of people who get COVID-19 can stay sick for a very long time after.

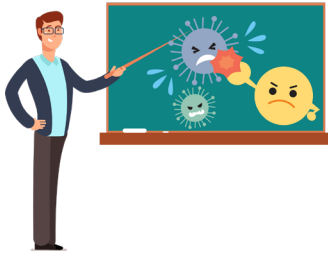COVID-19 is still spreading and making people sick right now.

You can learn more about COVID-19 by reading our fact sheet on the COVID-19 vaccine.
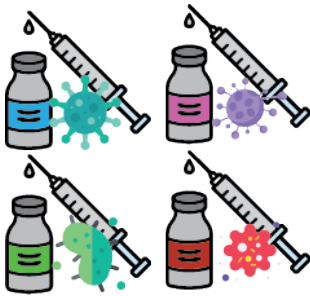
What are vaccines?

Vaccines help protect us from germs.

They teach our body how to fight germs.

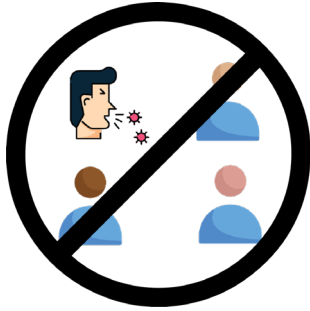Every vaccine is made to fight a specific germ.

They teach our body to recognize that kind of germ.

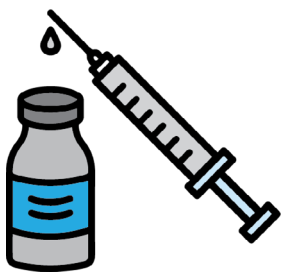So when our body finds those germs, it's ready to stop them.

Vaccines can keep us from getting sick.

Vaccines can keep us from giving germs to someone else.

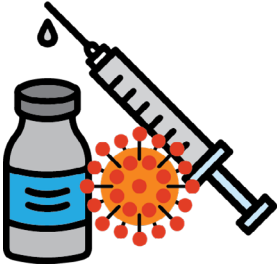Vaccines can help us keep the people around us from getting sick.
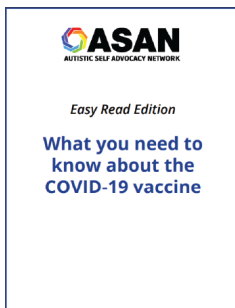

We usually get vaccines as shots.

We have vaccines for COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines can keep us from getting COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines are shots.

You can learn more about the vaccines in our fact sheet on the COVID-19 vaccine.
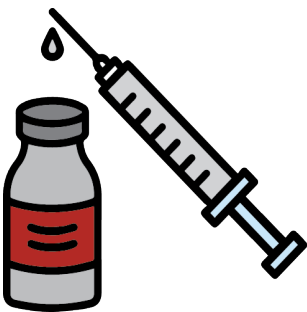
Some COVID-19 vaccines are given in one shot.

Other COVID-19 vaccines are given in two shots.

If you get two shots you get one shot at first.
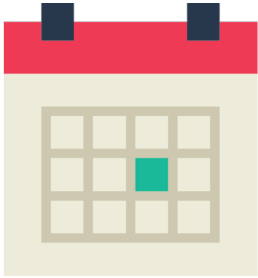
Then you wait a month.
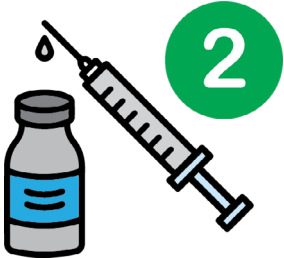
Then you get the second shot.
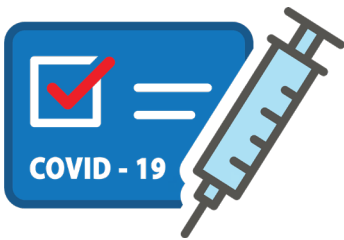
When you get the vaccine you get a card.
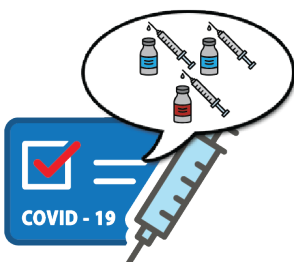
The card will say what type of vaccine you got and when you got it.

What is a booster?
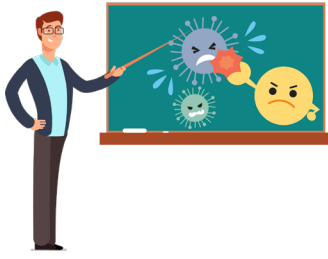
Vaccines teach your body how to fight a germ.

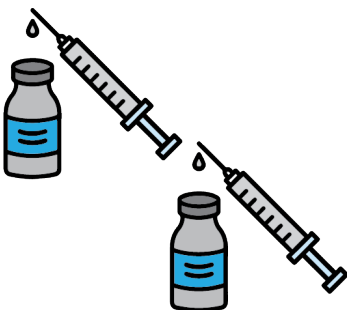They are very good at teaching your body to fight that germ.

But sometimes your body starts to forget after a while.
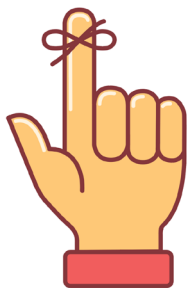
When that happens, it helps to get a reminder.

A **booster** is like a reminder for your body.

A booster is another shot.
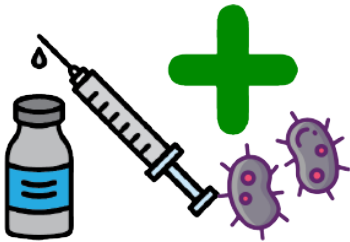
It is more vaccine for the same germ as before.

It reminds your body how to recognize that germ.

It reminds your body how to stop that germ.

Should I get a booster for COVID-19?
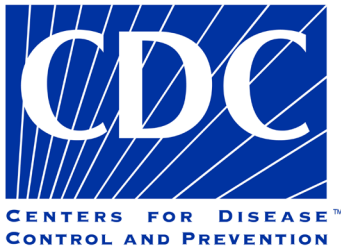
The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** is part of the government.

They make decisions about COVID-19 vaccines.

Right now, the CDC says anyone older than 12 who got the vaccine should get a booster

This includes people who got one or two shots.

Getting the booster can help keep you from getting sick
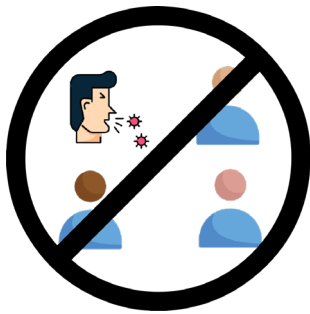
It can help keep you from giving COVID-19 to other people.

It is extra important for some people in **high-risk** groups to get the booster.

High-risk can mean 2 things.

High-risk can mean people who are the most likely to catch COVID-19
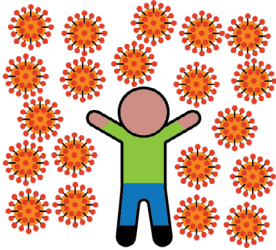
For example:

- People who live in institutions or jails.

- Support workers.

- Homeless people.
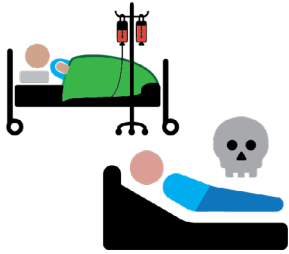
High-risk can also mean people who are more likely to get really sick, or die, if they catch COVID-19. For example:

• Older people

• People with certain disabilities, like Down Syndrome or diabetes.

Everyone who is over 12 and got one or two shots before should get the booster.

But it is extra important for these two groups to get a booster to stay safe.
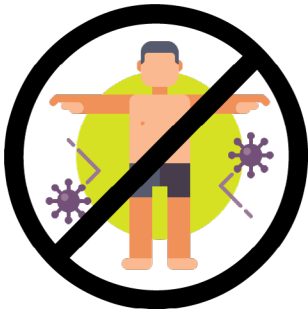
Some people are **immunocompromised**.

Immunocompromised means their bodies need extra help to stop germs.

This can be because they have to take medicines that make it hard to fight germs.

It can be because something else like a disease makes it hard for their body to fight germs.

People who are immunocompromised are also high risk.

People who are immunocompromised should get the booster.

Some people who are immunocompromised get three shots.

The third shot is extra help in learning how to fight COVID-19.

This extra shot is different from the booster.

If you got three shots, you should still get the booster.

You should get the booster 5 months after the third shot.
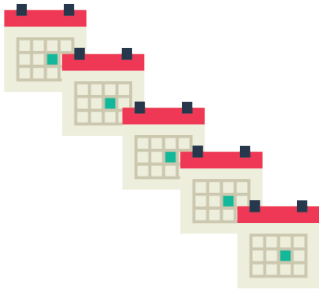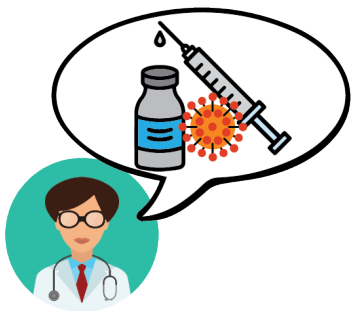
If you are immunocompromised, ask your doctor when you should get the booster.
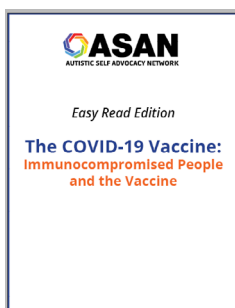
You can find more information in <u>our fact sheet on Immunocompromised People and the Vaccine</u>.

When should I get a booster?
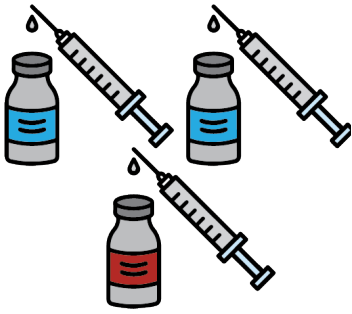
When you should get a booster depends on the type of vaccine you got.
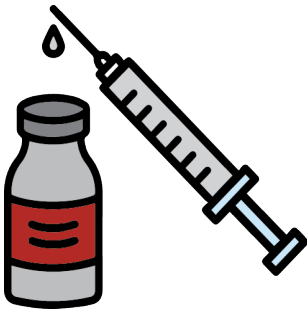
If you got the vaccine in 1 shot, you can get a booster *2 months* after your shot.
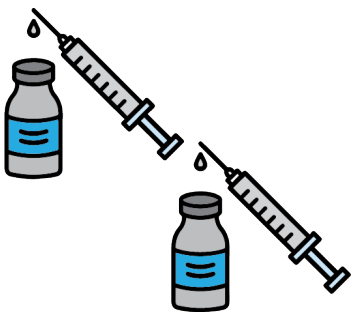
If you got the vaccine in 2 shots, you can get a booster *5 months* after your second shot.
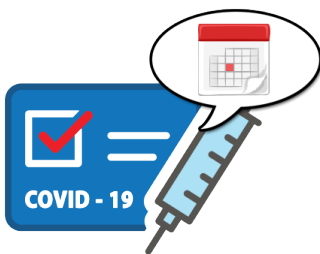
Your vaccine card will say when you got your vaccine.
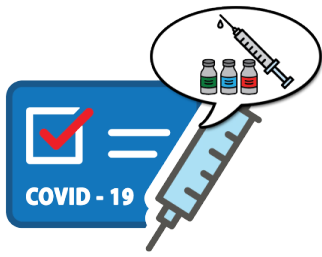
It will also say which type of vaccine you got before.
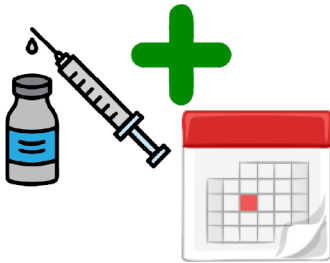
This can help you find out when you can get the booster.

You can also ask your doctor.

Your doctor can help you figure out when and where to get the booster.

Which vaccine should I get if I need a booster?
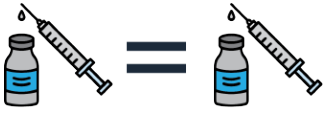
If you are younger than 18, you will get the same vaccine as your first two doses.
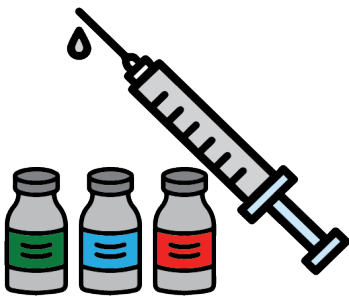
If you are 18 or older, you can get *any COVID-19 vaccine* when you get the booster.
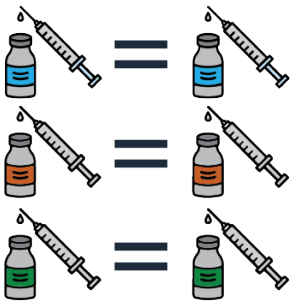
You might get the same vaccine you got before
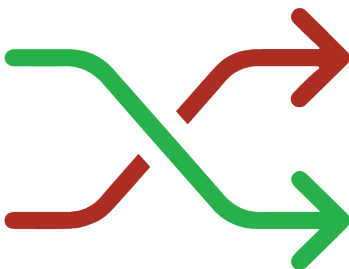
You might get a different one.

Any COVID-19 vaccine is okay.

Any vaccine will help.

If you got the one-shot vaccine, you should get a different vaccine for your booster.
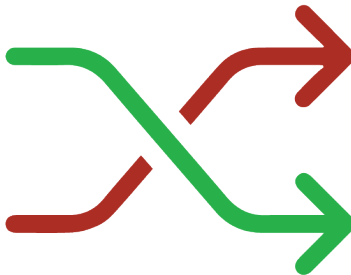
You should get a booster of one of the two-shot vaccines.
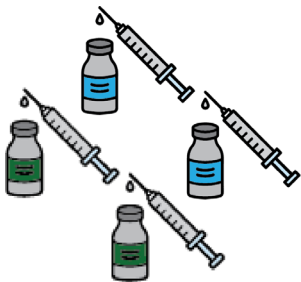
That will help your body learn better.
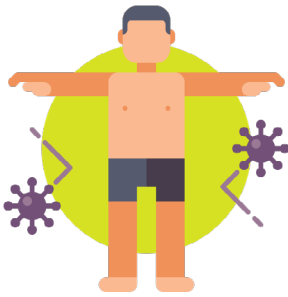
That will give you more protection from COVID-19.

You should get your booster as soon as possible.
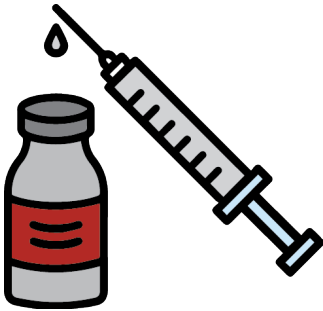
The one-shot vaccine works well to protect you from COVID-19.
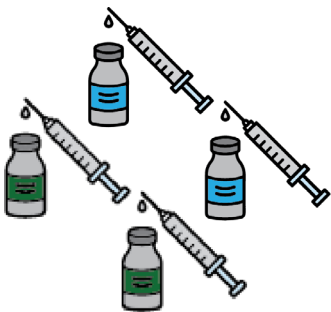
But getting a booster shot from one of the two-shot vaccines will help even more.

Why didn't I know about boosters before?

COVID-19 is a very new disease.

A lot of people are working very hard to stop it.

They are working hard to learn the best ways to keep people safe.

We know that vaccines work very well to keep people safe.

But we are still learning a lot about how to make vaccines as useful as possible.

Since we started making COVID-19 vaccines, we learned some new things.
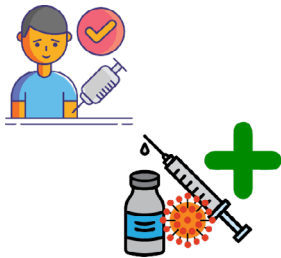
We learned that boosters help. And, we learned that boosters are safe.

People are still working very hard to keep us safe from COVID-19.

This means we are still learning more.

We might find out there's something we can do better.

We might learn new ways to stay safe.

When we learn more, the advice you hear might change.
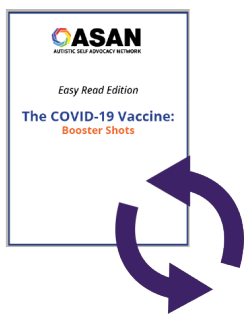
Even the advice in this guide might change.

If the advice changes it's because we learned something new.

It is important to tell people when we learn something new.

It can be confusing when we are told to do something different.

It can be upsetting when you need to do something you didn't expect.

But the people giving us advice, like the CDC, are trying their best to keep us safe and healthy.

We should do our best to stay safe and healthy too.

And sometimes that means doing something we didn't expect before.
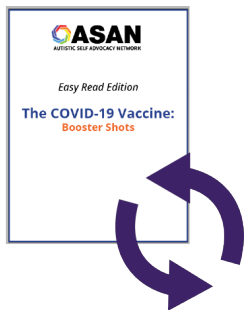
If the advice from the CDC changes, we will update this guide.

We will do our best to make sure you know what to do.

Will I need another booster later?

For some germs, your body doesn't need a lot of reminders to stop them.
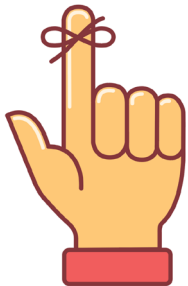
For some germs, your body needs a lot of reminders.
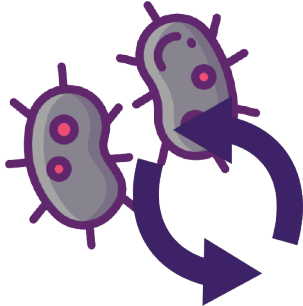
Or, the germs can change.

Your body can need more boosters to fight these germs.

Some germs change so much that your body needs reminders every year.

Flu is one germ like this.

We get the flu vaccine once a year.

It reminds our body how to fight the flu.

Right now, *we don't know* what sort of germ COVID-19 is.

This means we don't know if we might need more boosters later.

We are still learning more about COVID-19.

We are still learning more about how long our bodies remember how to fight it.
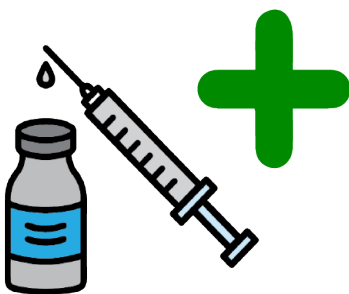
You might need another booster later.
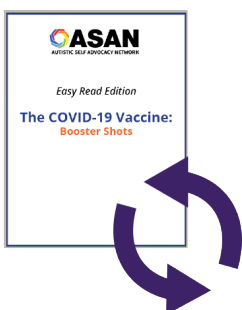
If we find out people need another booster, we will update this guide as soon as we know.

To Learn More

1

Plain Language COVID-19 Resources: https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/covid-pl/

2

A Self-Advocate's Guide to COVID-19: https://gmsavt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/A_Self_Advocates_Guide_to_COVID-19_2020.pdf

3

COVID-19 Vaccine Information in Plain Language: https://gmsavt.org/resources/covid-19-vaccine-information-in-plain-language

4 COVID-19 Vaccine Facts for the Developmental Disabilities Community: https://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/publications/documents/COVID19VaccineFactsDDCommunity-F.pdf

5 "Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine" Social Story: https://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/publications/documents/GettingACOVID19VaccineSocialStoryIDD-F.pdf

6 Coronavirus/COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/AIR-Coronavirus-FAQs-508.pdf

7   Infographic about COVID-19 Vaccines: https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/c/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccines-infographic

8   Myths and Facts About the COVID-19 Vaccine: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html

9   Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html

10   Easy to Read COVID-19 Safety: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/easy-to-read/

11 "Care for yourself one small way each day" Fact Sheet: https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/care-for-yourself/pdfs/General-Public-Care-for-Yourself.pdf

12 COVID-19 Information for People with Developmental Disabilities: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevelopment/covid-19/developmental-behavioral-disorders.html

13 COVID-19 Materials for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Care Providers: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevelopment/COVID-19-Materials-for-People-with-IDD.html

14 Baltimore City Health Department infographics about variants: https://www.facebook.com/BaltimoreHealth/photos/pcb.10159244388310642/10159244385470 6

15 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health infographics about how well vaccines work: https://www.facebook.com/JohnsHopkinsSPH/photos/pcb.10158131891551245/10158131889621245

16 vaccines.gov homepage: https://www.vaccines.gov/

17

Variants of the Virus (CDC) (Not Easy-Read/ Plain Language): https://www.cdc.gov/ coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variants. html