

# 6 things to tell patients about their COVID-19 vaccine card

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Social media has been flooded with images of people proudly displaying their COVID-19 vaccination cards—and the impetus for doing that is understandable. While that little white card has helped bring a sense of normalcy to people across the country, one question remains: What should your patients do with their COVID-19 vaccination cards? One physician explains what to tell patients to keep in mind after receiving their vaccine card.

More than 140 million people have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Whether a person has received the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, everyone should receive a vaccination card. This card includes the data, location and which COVID-19 vaccine the person received.

AMA member Purvi Parikh, MD, an allergist and immunologist as well as a vaccine researcher in New York City, shares what patients should know about their COVID-19 vaccination card.

## Cover personal information

Many people have already shared photos with their COVID-19 vaccine card. But Dr. Parikh explained that it is important not to take a selfie with a vaccination card “because there’s actually been a lot of counterfeit cards being made.”

Instead of taking a selfie with the vaccination card, Dr. Parikh recommends taking a photo while receiving the vaccine, which is what she did.

If a patient does want to take a selfie with their card, she recommends covering up personal information as well as the lot number and manufacturer because “someone could pretend to be you and copy the card—the same way someone can steal your identity for credit cards and other financial information.”

## Have a backup copy

People who have received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, should consider having a backup copy of their vaccination card, says the CDC.

One way to keep a COVID-19 vaccination card safe is to “make a copy of it,” said Dr. Parikh, noting that this can be done by “taking a photo on your cellphone—that way you have it easily accessible.”

Additionally, “make sure all the information on the card is correct and up to date,” she said. If it is not, inform the vaccine provider of the incorrect information.

## Skip card lamination

“We recommend not laminating especially because we don’t know yet if booster shots are going to be needed,” said Dr. Parikh. “We also don’t know if additional shots and information will need to be added either.”

Instead, “keep the card in a plastic covering like those plastic holders for IDs at conventions to keep it from getting ruined, because once you laminate it you can’t write anything on it again,” she said.

## Replacement can be complicated

“You don’t want to lose your card, but if you do lose it—that’s why the photo is helpful,” said Dr. Parikh. But if a card is lost, “you could always request another one from where you received your vaccine, which can be complicated, especially if you did it in one of those pop-up vaccine sites.

“But the best way to go forward is to get another card,” she added, noting that “if you’re in the system they can verify that you did receive a COVID-19 vaccine.”

Learn more from the CDC about what to do if you’ve lost your vaccination card.

## There’s no easy access to the data

The vaccination card is a patient’s personal proof of immunization. Their information is also recorded in their state’s immunization registry. And while it may currently be difficult to access data on who is

vaccinated and who is not, Dr. Parikh is “hoping that improves as we get more people vaccinated.”

“Our primary goal is to get people vaccinated—period,” she said. “As more people get vaccinated against COVID-19, we’ll be able to organize the data better, the same way we do for flu shots and other vaccinations.”

“Once we get to a place where infection rates are low enough, where it’s not a public health threat, we may not need to do all of these things,” said Dr. Parikh. “But for the foreseeable future, we will have to be prepared to follow precautions and maintain records of our vaccine cards.”

## **Share vaccination status with doctor**

It is also important for patients to share that they have received a COVID-19 vaccination with their doctor to “enter into the electronic medical record or paper chart in their office,” Dr. Parikh said. This is similar to what “we do with other vaccines, so it becomes part of your medical record as well.”

Sharing that you have been vaccinated against COVID-19 and having it entered into the EHR also helps “in the event a card is lost, or documentation is needed,” she said.