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NEW YORK CITY COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE OPENS TODAY AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



Today, April 23, New York City opened a new COVID-19 vaccination site at the American Museum of Natural History. The vaccination site opens under the blue whale in the Museum’s Milstein Hall of Ocean Life and will operate from 8 am to 6 pm, Friday through Tuesday each week, offering approximately 1,000 shots per day. The Museum’s partnership with the City on this historic and lifesaving effort aligns with its mission of public access and fostering scientific knowledge and understanding, and continues its work to address and educate the public about issues at the frontiers of human health, including COVID-19.

The opening of the vaccination site brought together New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio; Museum President Ellen V. Futter; Frederick P. Rose Director of the Hayden Planetarium Neil deGrasse Tyson; Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi, and Executive Director of District Council 37 Henry Garrido.

“It’s going to take all of us to bring back the city we know and love. With that, I would like to wish a warm whale-come to the American Museum of Natural History,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “The City thanks you for your partnership in getting every New Yorker vaccinated.”

“I cannot think of a more important manifestation of the Museum’s mission in action than to be a part of this momentous vaccination effort that is so vital to the health and welfare of our fellow New Yorkers and for the recovery of our City,” said Ellen V. Futter, President of the American Museum of Natural History. “In years to come, it is my hope that we will look at images of people getting vaccinated under the beloved blue whale in the Milstein Hall of Ocean Life, and it will be a snapshot of New York and New Yorkers fighting back, caring for themselves, caring for one another, and of the time when things started to turn for the better. The Museum is immensely proud to partner with the City on this historic undertaking and greatly appreciates the Milstein Family’s continuing support of our work.”

The COVID-19 vaccination site at the Museum will serve all eligible New York City residents (18+), with set-aside appointments for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and staff and District Council 37 (DC37) members, as well as Museum staff. The site will be open to walk-in appointments for all eligible New York City residents, or appointments can be booked in advance at vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or through the City’s hotline: 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). Everyone who receives a vaccination at the Museum will receive a voucher for complimentary general admission for up to four people for a future Museum visit, with advance reservations required and available on amnh.org or through the Museum’s [Explorer app](#). Details can be found on the Museum’s website at amnh.org/vaccination.

“Our cultural institutions are the jewels of New York City. There simply is no recovery without their reopening,” said Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME. “That’s why it’s critical the people who make them run are protected. Granting these workers priority vaccination appointments helps everyone. We’re so grateful for this partnership with Mayor de Blasio and the American Museum of Natural History.”

“The American Museum of Natural History is a historic site, and not just because of the iconic blue whale,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi. “The museum has a legacy of public health and scientific education, and we thank them for their dedication to the people of New York City and for aiding in the vaccination effort.”

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum has offered a rich array of pandemic-related educational programming, including a series of successful virtual panel discussions aimed at [demystifying the pandemic](#), [educating the general public about vaccines](#), and [providing New Yorkers with information about what to expect of the vaccination process](#). As the experience of the

pandemic and its impact continues to evolve, the Museum's research and public education efforts around COVID-19 will continue, with Howard Milstein and his family as lead education sponsor of this work.

Howard Milstein said: "I am pleased to be part of this initiative, and believe it is fitting this announcement take place in the Milstein Hall of Ocean Life – a room my parents, Paul and Irma Milstein, loved so much. It has been nearly 20 years since my family supported the renovation of Milstein Hall to help ensure new generations could experience the wonders of science, nature and sustainable environments. We now look to ensure the health and safety of all New Yorkers as the city reopens and renews. I am honored to play a role in that effort."

The Museum's Legacy in Public Health

For 150 years, the American Museum of Natural History has played a vital role in informing the public about significant public health events. In 1908, an exhibition about tuberculosis – at the time, one of the leading causes of death worldwide – drew as many as 10,000 visitors per day. For the next 30 years, the Museum's Department of Public Health produced exhibits and educational materials about the biology of food safety, water purification, and sanitation. More recent exhibitions include *Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease* (1999), which explored communicable diseases; *The Genomic Revolution* (2001-2002), the first exhibition to describe the emerging science of genomics to the public; *Brain: The Inside Story* (2010-2011), which showcased the latest research in neuroscience; *Countdown to Zero* (2015-2017), which presented the science and policies behind efforts to wipe out eradicable diseases in collaboration with The Carter Center; and *The Secret World Inside You* (2015-2016) and *Inside You* (2017-2019), which highlighted the rapidly evolving science about the human microbiome and implications for human health.

The Museum's exhibitions and educational programs are informed by its research, which focuses on examining diverse species and patterns of evolutionary change over the past 3.5 billion years. With extensive research in comparative biology and bioinformatics, the Museum is in a unique position to gather and synthesize data and to provide broad interpretations, leading the way in new areas of scientific research that have applications for human health. In collaboration with researchers from across the country and around the globe, the Museum's scientists are pursuing a range of research areas relating to epidemiology, including the origin, genome, and spread of COVID-19 and vectors for other zoonotic diseases. This includes research that identified a new gene in SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) that may have contributed to its

pandemic potential, the development of modeling methods to predict unrecognized wildlife host species for viruses related to SARS-CoV-2 that will help prioritize future sampling for emerging diseases, and a project studying the early genomic epidemiology, transmission patterns, and molecular evolution of SARS-CoV-2.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869 and currently celebrating its 150th anniversary, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, including those in the Rose Center for Earth and Space, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. The Museum's approximately 175 scientists draw on a world-class research collection of more than 34 million artifacts and specimens, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, the only such free-standing, degree-granting programs at any museum in the United States. The Museum's website, digital videos, and apps for mobile devices bring its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions around the world. Visit amnh.org for more information.

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