

## COVID-19 Vaccine Information Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: **January 25, 2021**

The purpose of this document is to provide public health and community partners with frequently asked questions and answers that may be used to assist in responding to inquiries from their communities.

**PLEASE NOTE: New or updated information appears in orange text.**

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Is there a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)?**

Yes, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) for two COVID-19 vaccines which have been shown to be safe and effective as determined by data from the manufacturers and findings from large clinical trials. (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna)

#### **How is the vaccine given?**

Both vaccines are injected into a muscle (“intramuscular”). Intramuscular vaccines are usually injected into the shoulder muscle called the deltoid.

#### **Does it hurt?**

There may be some discomfort as with any vaccine at the injection site, but it usually is temporary.

#### **How many shots do I have to get?**

Both the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, require two doses. The interval (or, spacing) between the Pfizer vaccine dose 1 and dose 2 is 21 days. The interval (or, spacing) between the Moderna vaccine, dose 1 and dose 2 is 28 days.

#### **If I get the Covid-19 vaccine, should I get the second shot with another brand?**

No. The second shot must be the same brand as the first shot.

#### **How long will protection last?**

It is not yet known how long a person who gets the vaccine will be protected: it could be lifetime, like the polio vaccine or it could be a year, like the flu shot. Experts are studying this to learn more, and we will share new evidence as it becomes available.

#### **Will I need to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine/Do I need insurance?**

You will not be charged for the vaccine if it is administered to you at a state fixed location. If you receive the vaccine through a provider, you could be charged vaccine administration fees.

#### **Will there be enough vaccine for everyone?**

Yes, eventually. Initial vaccine supply will be limited so not everyone will be able to be vaccinated right away. COVID-19 vaccine will be given to people at highest risk first. Based on the recommendations from the National Academies of

Sciences, Engineering and Medicine’s Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, a phased and equitable distribution plan has been developed for New Hampshire.

### **What can I do as we wait for a vaccine?**

COVID-19 continues to circulate in our communities. You should still socially distance with anyone not in your household and use a [cloth facemask](#) . If you are not feeling well you should stay home and [get tested](#).

### **Can someone who has been fully vaccinated still pass COVID to others without knowing it?**

It is not yet known, but it is possible that people who are fully vaccinated or previously infected could still get asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection, or attenuated (milder) COVID-19. Therefore, even people who are fully vaccinated or previously infected need to continue to practice distancing, avoid social groups and gatherings, and wear face masks at all times when in public places.

## **PHASES AND ELIGIBILITY**

### **Where and when can I get a vaccine?**

Registration for NH residents in Phase 1b will begin on January 22nd at 8:00am. The registration and scheduling process for vaccination will vary depending on the person’s prioritization criteria and location of vaccination clinic:

- Persons 65 years of age and older should register to be vaccinated at a fixed site by visiting <https://vaccines.nh.gov>. Persons without internet access can call 2-1-1 to get help with registration.
- Persons under 65 years of age who have certain health conditions need to register through their healthcare provider to confirm eligibility.
- Other Phase 1b individuals should also register to be vaccinated at a fixed site by visiting <https://vaccines.nh.gov> (or call 2-1-1 if no internet access), through their organization (e.g. hospital employee), or through a vaccination clinic organized by a Regional Public Health Network (RPHN).

For persons under the age of 65 years who require provider verification of medical conditions before vaccination:

- Providers who have access to vaccine will vaccinate their own patients and will register and schedule eligible patients for clinics organized through their healthcare organization.
- Providers that do not have access to vaccine will refer patients to a fixed site. Once the provider confirms eligibility, the patient will receive an email invitation to schedule vaccination at a fixed site. For patients without email, DPHS will contact them to help schedule an appointment.
- Persons without a healthcare provider should call 2-1-1 to get connected to a healthcare provider in their area.

Stay tuned for more information on later phases. ([Vaccine Information Page](#))

### **I don’t have internet access and I want to register for the vaccine when registration opens. Will someone be able to help me register?**

When vaccine registration for 1b opens on 1/22/21, the NH COVID Coordinating Office (CCO) will be set up to assist individuals with registration. You can call 2-1-1, and when prompted, click the option about registering for the vaccine. Please have patience as we expect there could be long wait times to connect to the call center. For this reason, we encourage anyone who can use the internet to register online.

### **My PCP is in another state. How will the referral process work for me?**

You would follow the same referral process as someone whose doctor is located in NH.

### **I have a house in NH but my primary residence is in another state. Can I still receive the vaccine in NH?**

At this time, non-New Hampshire residents are not able to be vaccinated at New Hampshire vaccination clinics unless that person is an employee of a business or organization in New Hampshire that is prioritized for vaccination (i.e. healthcare worker, first responder, correctional facility staff, or working in a residential facility for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities). Non-New Hampshire residents should seek vaccination through their own state processes. You should be vaccinated in the state of your primary residence. If you have a driver's license you should be vaccinated in the state that issued your driver's license.

### **How do you register for a second shot?**

After you get your first shot, you will get an e-mail and/or text reminder to schedule your second shot. NH has planned and committed to allocating a second shot for everyone who gets their first shot.

### **What will I need to provide when I register for the vaccine online?**

When registering for the vaccine you will be asked for your name, date of birth, home address, e-mail, and telephone number. After registering online you will get an e-mail that will allow you to log in and select your preferred location, date, and time. At this time we do not know how long the delay will be between registering and receiving the confirmation e-mail.

### **Will proof of anything be required during the registration process?**

The individual does not need one of the documents listed below to register, but will need to bring at least one of the documents when they arrive to get their vaccine:

- Valid, unexpired NH Driver license or Non-Driver ID card.
- A payroll check, payroll document, or employment contract showing individual's legal New Hampshire address, dated within the last 60 days.
- A government issued payment (ie. social security), showing individual's legal New Hampshire address, dated within the last 60 days.

### **Is there a list of locations where the vaccine will be distributed?**

You will be able to select the location for your vaccination when you schedule your appointment.

### **Can children get the vaccine?**

Currently, no available vaccine is approved for use in persons under 16 years of age. Children will be likely given the opportunity to get the vaccine in the future. As clinical trials expand, we will know more about the safety of the vaccine in children.

### **I am pregnant. Can I get the vaccine?**

If you are currently pregnant, we ask that you talk about the risks and benefits of the vaccine with your provider. The new COVID-19 vaccines have not been studied in pregnant women, so we don't have a lot of information on their safety and effectiveness during pregnancy. However, because these COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live-virus, and because the viral mRNA particles break down quickly in your body after they're used to create an immune response, we think the risk of the vaccine to you and your unborn baby is low. We also know that actual infection with COVID-19 while you are pregnant can increase your risk of severe illness that could result in hospitalization, or even death. And COVID-19 might put you at increased risk of bad pregnancy outcomes, like preterm birth. Therefore, we think that even pregnant women would benefit from the vaccine but we ask that you discuss this with your provider who knows you and your baby the best. You can also find more information at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>.

## SAFETY

### **How will we know if a COVID-19 vaccine is safe?**

The process for vaccine trials has not changed. [Operation Warp Speed](#) has allowed for trials to progress faster because of federal funding, without compromising safety. The development time is shortened, but all of the usual processes are in place for safety such as large clinical trials, which includes different populations (such as elderly or minority persons), independent review by FDA and CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and our own state experts.

### **I had COVID-19. Should I still be vaccinated?**

Yes. Unless you are currently actively infected with COVID-19, you should get the vaccine. Studies have shown that some individuals can get the disease more than once. However, if you were treated for COVID-19 symptoms with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Will I be able to stop wearing a mask and social distancing if I get the vaccine?**

No. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue to use all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic - cover your mouth and nose with a mask, wash hands often, and stay at least 6 feet away from others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change the current recommendations. Other factors, such as how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

### **Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot give you the disease. For more information visit the [CDC website](#).

### **I have a compromised immune system. Is it safe for me to get the vaccine?**

Probably yes, but you should consult with your healthcare provider about your specific concerns.

### **I live with someone whose immune system doesn't work well. Is it safe for me to get the vaccine?**

Yes. Because of the way the vaccine is made, it cannot give you the disease and so you cannot infect another person by getting the vaccine.

### **I understand the vaccine seems to be safe, but what if I get sick from the vaccine?**

CDC and FDA encourage the public to report possible side effects (called adverse events) to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). This national system collects data to look for adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns. Reports to VAERS help CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. Safety is a top priority.

Healthcare providers will be required to report certain adverse events to VAERS. CDC is also using a new smartphone-based tool called [v-safe](#) to check on people's health after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. When you receive your vaccine, you should also receive a v-safe information sheet telling you how to enroll in v-safe. If you enroll, you will get regular text messages with surveys where you can report any problems or adverse reactions you have after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

## SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccines be added to the list of mandatory vaccinations for schools?**

At this time, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has no plans to add the COVID-19 vaccines to the list of mandatory vaccinations for schools. In addition, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently only approved for

use in individuals aged 16 and older and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is only approved for use in individuals aged 18 and older. Therefore, these vaccines could not be required for most students.

DHHS, through a rulemaking process, is permitted to add vaccines to the mandatory vaccine list for schools under RSA 141-C:20-a, II. State law provides exemptions to mandatory vaccination for schools which can be found at RSA 141-C:20-c.

**Can a school district require students get a COVID-19 vaccine that is not on the State’s mandatory list in order to attend school?**

No. State law already provides for a process to determine which vaccines are mandatory for students. State law preempts school districts, which means a school district cannot mandate that students get a vaccine that is not on the State’s mandatory list in order to attend school.

**Does the State recommend that employers and businesses mandate the COVID-19 vaccines for employees or customers?**

No. Because the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have been approved through an Emergency Use Authorization, the State does not intend to mandate these vaccines in any way and generally does not recommend that these vaccines (or any other COVID-19 vaccine approved through an EUA) be mandated for employees or customers.

Reasons for this recommendation include:

- The complexity of the legal issues surrounding mandates for vaccines approved through an EUA;
- The difficulty of determining how to implement mandates for vaccines approved through an EUA when the vaccines may not be approved or recommended for everyone;
- The questions of equity and fairness that a mandate poses when neither the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines nor other COVID-19 vaccines will be available to the entire population at the same time; and
- The fact that the State of New Hampshire does not have and will not be implementing any type of uniform vaccination certification for the purpose of implementing this type of mandate.

**What should a business consider before imposing a COVID-19 vaccine mandate?**

If an employer or business does wish to mandate the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines (or other approved COVID-19 vaccines) for customers or employees, that employer or business should review the answers to the below questions. In addition, certain organizations may face specific circumstances not considered here. Employers and other organizations will want to carefully consider all implications of a vaccination mandate with their legal counsel. The answers below assume that vaccinations are being considered only for employees or customers who fall into categories of individuals for whom the vaccine is both approved and recommended and no applicable restrictions have been imposed as part of the EUA approval process.

**Can an employer require its employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to come to work?**

Yes. Generally, employers have the right to implement a mandatory vaccination program. In fact, employers, such as healthcare and childcare providers, require flu vaccinations each year. However, mandatory vaccine programs administered by the employer may require pre-screening questions that must be job-related and consistent with business necessity. Employers should carefully consider all implications of a vaccination mandate and consult with their legal counsel. Mandatory vaccination programs must be nondiscriminatory in nature, and employers may be required to make accommodations for employees under federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Civil Rights Act and other state and federal anti-discrimination laws. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which enforces federal laws regarding discrimination, has provided guidance on workplace vaccination programs, including for the COVID-19 vaccines. See What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws. Certain employers may also need to take into account collective bargaining requirements.

**Can a school district require teachers get a vaccine in order to come to work?**

A school district would be treated much like other employers. In addition, school districts may need to consider collective bargaining requirements.

**Can a business require customers to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination in order to patronize that business?**

Generally yes, as long as any required accommodations are made under the ADA and the business complies with any applicable provisions of the Civil Rights Act and any other state and federal anti-discrimination laws. Businesses should carefully consider all implications of a vaccination mandate and consult with their legal counsel. The State of New Hampshire does not recommend this type of mandate and will not be implementing any type of uniform vaccination certification for the purpose of implementing this type of mandate.

**KEY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION**

Topic/Inquiry	Contact	Phone/Email
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General COVID Information <a href="http://www.nh.gov/covid19">www.nh.gov/covid19</a></li> </ul>	2-1-1 New Hampshire	1-866-444-4211 TTY: 603-634-3388
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccine Registration</li> </ul>	<a href="http://vaccines.nh.gov">vaccines.nh.gov</a>  or if no access to internet:  2-1-1 New Hampshire	1-866-444-4211 TTY: 603-634-3388
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Vaccine Questions</li> </ul>	2-1-1 New Hampshire	<a href="mailto:covidvaccine@dhhs.nh.gov">covidvaccine@dhhs.nh.gov</a>

**Other Resources**

- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#),
- [Journal of American Medical Association \(JAMA\)](#)
- [Public Health Communications Collaborative](#)
- [NH DHHS Vaccine Information Page](#)
- [New Hampshire COVID-19 Vaccine Phases](#)
- [NH DHHS COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ for Healthcare Providers and Public Health Partners](#)