



# COVID-19 Vaccines

## Frequently Asked Questions

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

The information in this document will change frequently as we learn more about COVID-19 vaccines. There is a lot we are learning as the pandemic and COVID-19 vaccines evolve. The approach in Michigan will adapt as we learn more. Updated January 6, 2021.

### Why COVID-19 vaccination is important

#### Will COVID-19 vaccination help keep me from getting COVID-19?

Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, [particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#). COVID-19 can have [serious, life-threatening complications](#), and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you. Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools we have available.

### What to expect when you get vaccinated

#### Is there a cost to get vaccinated?

No fees will be charged to get vaccinated. There will be no cost sharing from insurance plans. Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. COVID-19 providers agree to administer vaccine regardless of an individual's ability to pay and regardless of their coverage status, and may not seek any reimbursement, including through balance billing, from a vaccine recipient. However, vaccine providers will be able to charge administration fees for giving or administering the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund.

#### Will more than one dose of COVID-19 vaccine be required?

Yes. The current vaccines need two shots to be effective. It is very important that you receive the vaccine from the same manufacturer both times and get the doses within the required time frame to ensure the best protection from COVID-19. If you receive the Pfizer vaccine the second dose needs to be 21 days after the first dose, and the second dose of the Moderna vaccine needs to be 28 days after the first.

### **How will I be reminded to get the second dose?**

MDHHS plans to use multiple ways to notify you of your second dose. COVID-19 vaccination record cards (reminder cards) will be provided when you receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The card provides room for a written reminder for a second-dose appointment. If you have a smartphone, consider taking a photo of your vaccination record and entering the date the next vaccine dose is due in your calendar. MDHHS is also developing text messaging reminders that will be sent prior to your second dose. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the "V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker" application for your phone that can send you a reminder.

***To ensure the best protection from COVID-19, it is very important to not skip the second dose. The second dose must be from the same vaccine manufacturer, so it will be important to ensure that where you receive your second dose has the right vaccine. If you can, it would be best to follow up with the same provider who gave you your first shot.***

### **Can any doctor's office, clinic, or pharmacy offer the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Initially, the federal government will distribute a limited supply of vaccine to each state. Michigan has allocated this limited supply to hospitals and health care settings where workers have contact with patients. Long term care facilities where some of the most vulnerable people live will also receive supply, which will be distributed through pharmacies and local health departments with support from the Michigan National Guard.

Doctor's offices, clinics, and pharmacies who are enrolled in the [vaccination program](#) can offer the vaccine when the vaccine becomes available to them. As supply increases, doctor's offices, clinics, and pharmacies will be able to obtain the vaccine directly, hopefully in late Spring 2021.

### **Will people who have already had COVID-19 be able to get vaccinated?**

Yes. People who have had COVID-19 can still get a vaccine. CDC recommends getting it after you have recovered. You should check with your health care provider if you have questions.

### **If I already had COVID-19, should I get vaccinated? Shouldn't I be immune?**

Yes, you should still get the COVID-19 vaccine, even if you have had COVID-19. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this.

### **Do I need to keep wearing a mask after I get vaccinated?**

Yes. Michiganders should continue to wear masks, social distance from those not in their household and wash their hands, even after receiving vaccine. More information is available on the CDC website in their [FAQ document](#).

## Safety of the vaccine

### Is the vaccine safe?

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated. Safety is the first priority. The process used to approve the COVID-19 vaccines is the same proven process that was used to create safe and effective vaccines for the flu, polio, measles, whooping cough and more. While the COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine authorized or approved for use.

More information about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine is available at the CDC and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) website:

- [CDC Vaccine Benefits website](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Safety website](#)
- [CHOP website](#)

### How can a safe vaccine be made so quickly?

Vaccine development typically takes many years. However, scientists had already begun research for coronavirus vaccines during previous outbreaks caused by related coronaviruses (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). That earlier research provided a head start for rapid development of vaccines to protect against infection with COVID-19. No steps were skipped in the development of this vaccine but modifications to the process were made to shorten the timeline without sacrificing safety, such as:

- Overlapping phase I and phase II clinical trials. Phase I studies include a small number of people and evaluate whether the vaccine causes an immune response and is safe. Scientists looked at data from a group of people in phase I as phase II was progressing to make these evaluations.
- While completing large phase III trials, manufacturers began producing the vaccine, so that if it were shown to be safe and effective, they would have large numbers of doses ready.
- While waiting for a vaccine to be ready, many other aspects of vaccine delivery were prepared (e.g., developing plans for how to distribute the first, limited quantities available, ensuring adequate supplies for distributing and administering vaccine.)

More information is available at the [CHOP website](#).

### Can this vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. This vaccine gives your body a code which helps it recognize the virus, so your body can fight it off in the future.

### Can I get other vaccines at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine?

CDC recommends that no other vaccine be given 14 days before or after you get the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Can women who are pregnant get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The CDC has recommended that pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant may be offered the vaccine, if they are in one of the vaccine priority groups and in consultation with their health care provider.

### **Are there any tests people have to get before getting the vaccine?**

The CDC is not recommending a routine pregnancy test or an antibody blood test for COVID-19 before you get the vaccine. You should talk with your health care provider about any questions you have due to your personal, specific medical history.

### **Does the vaccine have any side effects?**

After COVID-19 vaccination, you may have some mild side effects. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection. The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. You may experience a low-grade fever, headache, and just a general feeling of “not yourself”. These are signs that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to, which is produce an immune response for you to have protection against this disease.

### **Can people with a history of allergic reactions get the vaccine?**

Most people who have food or environmental allergies can still get the vaccine. Prior to getting vaccinated, talk to your health care provider if you have had any severe reactions to medicines or vaccines in the past. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare and severe allergic reactions](#).

### **How are side effects being tracked?**

The CDC runs the [Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System](#) (VAERS), a national system to detect any possible symptoms or side effects that occur after someone has had a vaccine. Anyone who has had a vaccine can report concerns to VAERS.

### **What is V-safe?**

When you get your vaccine, you will get a link to access the “V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker” for your phone. Through V-safe, you can quickly tell the CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. CDC may follow up by phone to get more information. V-safe will also remind you to get the second COVID-19 vaccine dose when needed.

## **Vaccine distribution/prioritization**

### **When will the vaccine be available?**

Michigan began receiving vaccine in Michigan the week of December 14th. Due to the limited supply, MDHHS has prioritized how the vaccine will be distributed. Supply of the vaccine will increase substantially over the next few months. Those eligible to receive the vaccine will progress as supply increases.

### **Can I get the second dose of the vaccine in a different state than where I got the first dose?**

It's important to get the second dose of the same vaccine in the time frame required for your vaccine. You might be able to get that in a different state, but you should check before traveling to ensure availability in that state. Consult that state's COVID-19 vaccine website. Make sure you have your immunization records, including the card when you get your first dose.

### **Who will get the vaccine first?**

Distribution of the vaccine in Michigan will be in a phased approach because it will be several months before supply increases enough to vaccinate everyone.

The CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have defined different vaccination phases. The ACIP recently voted to update interim vaccine allocation recommendations. For further information review, [The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine](#).

### **When will the vaccine be available to the general public over age 16?**

The vaccine will be available to the general public when supply substantially increases in 2021, possibly in late spring. Until then, priority will be given to health care providers, essential workers, and vulnerable populations (i.e., individuals 65 years of age and older and individuals 16 years of age or older with high risk medical conditions. Individuals 16 and 17 years of age will need to receive the Pfizer vaccine only. The Moderna vaccine is only recommended for those 18 years and older.)

### **Do we have to wait for one group to be vaccinated before the next group can receive vaccine? How long will it take to move between phases?**

Vaccination of groups in one phase will likely not be complete before vaccination in another phase begins. Vaccination in these phases will likely overlap.

The timing of the start of vaccination in a phase is dependent on the guidance from CDC or ACIP, supply of vaccine from the manufacturer, how vaccine is allocated from the federal level to Michigan, and capacity to administer the vaccine to populations.

We hope to be able to offer vaccination to all individuals age 16 or older in Michigan in late spring. Individuals 16 and 17 years of age will need to receive the Pfizer vaccine only. The Moderna vaccine is only recommended for those 18 years and older.

### **Why are the phases changing?**

MDHHS has revised the implementation schedule in order to achieve the following goals:

- **Efficiency.** In order to vaccinate rapidly, MDHHS has limited the use of complex eligibility rules, including rules for determining who is a frontline or essential worker. For the next stage of the rollout, MDHHS has limited the Phase 1B essential workers category to workers who have high levels of personal exposure (Phase 1B, Group B).
- **Effectiveness.** While moving quickly, MDHHS is also targeting vaccine to those at greatest risk. To date, 80% of deaths have occurred among those 65 and older. In addition to

vaccinating Michiganders who are 75+ in Phase 1B (Phase 1B, Group A), MDHHS is accelerating to vaccinate individuals 65-74 years old in Phase 1C,

- **Equity.** In this phase, MDHHS is accelerating implementation of vaccination of 65-74 years due to concern around disparity in life expectancy by race/ethnicity for this group (Phase 1C, Group A). The simplicity of criteria will limit differential access to system based on income or privilege.

### **How is this following ACIP?**

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidance and recommendations regarding COVID-19 vaccination phases can be found [here](#). Currently, we are ensuring that all of phase 1A is vaccinated as recommended by the ACIP. There are times in which you may see an overlap of phases. One phase will not necessarily be completed before moving onto another phase. This is referred to as “gating.” Recently ACIP gave additional guidance on phase 1B and 1C. MDHHS updated their [prioritization guidance](#) to reflect this. MDHHS has expanded and moved to recommending all those 65 years and older be vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine. We have expanded further to ensure all those who are higher risk due to age are vaccinated. This still falls within the guidance provided by ACIP but altered slightly the order at which people are being vaccinated.

### **I am a Phase 1A worker, can I still get a vaccine?**

Yes. As we move forward through phases and open our vaccination services more, we can still ensure that all eligible persons from previous phases and those who missed opportunities during any phase can be vaccinated. ACIP has put forth guidance that states it is not necessary to vaccinate all individuals in one phase before initiating the next phase; phases may overlap.

### **I am a Health Care Provider, and I haven't been vaccinated yet, what do I do?**

If you are a health care provider who hasn't been vaccinated and you are part of a larger health system, you need to reach out to your employer to see if they have a plan in place on when and how you can get vaccinated. They will help guide you through their COVID-19 vaccination plan and assist you with when and how you can receive vaccine.

If you are not part of a health system and need to be vaccinated, you should reach out to your local health department to schedule to get vaccinated. Please do not call the health department but go to [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine) to find out how to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

### **How do I sign up to get vaccinated?**

First you need to be sure that you fall within the priority group currently recommended to receive vaccine. You can determine what priority group you are in and if you are eligible to receive vaccine at this time by reviewing the [MDHHS priority guidance](#). To make an appointment to receive your vaccine, do not call the health department but go to [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine) to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

### **How do I know if I am eligible for vaccine?**

You will know if you are eligible to receive vaccine by reviewing the [MDHHS prioritization guidance](#). Based on your risk, you will fit into a priority group and phase. Also stay up-to-date with the information that is being shared through various media outlets. You may also speak with your primary care provider, who can assist you with determining which priority group you fall into based on your risk level. It is encouraged that you speak to your primary care provider about any questions or concerns you may have regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. They know your medical history best and can help guide you.

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

Vaccines will be scheduled. Local Health Departments will be scheduling clinics in their communities. To make an appointment to receive your vaccine, do not call the health department but go to [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine) to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

We know this will take time and as we move through the phases, more listings will be posted. MDHHS is not providing vaccination clinics for the public, this will be done through the Local Health Departments, health systems and pharmacies as they will be engaged as we move to general populations.

### **I have heard about drive through vaccine clinics, where do I find one?**

Again, vaccination sites will be coordinated through the local health department and may include what are called drive through clinics. Vaccines are delivered while you remain in your car and complete the paperwork as well as the required observation time after you have received your vaccination. Local health departments will communicate availability when these locations are available based on the phases of vaccination.

### **What if someone gets the vaccine who is not on the priority list?**

We want to follow the prioritization guidance as closely as we can because this ensures that everyone will be vaccinated in a timely manner based on vaccine distributions we receive. It allows for vaccination to occur smoothly, so we do not run out of vaccine for those groups who are at highest risk within each phase. If a person is vaccinated outside of the priority list, we will count that dose, however, to best ensure we meet the needs of the entire public in an efficient manner we must follow the established MDHHS prioritization guidance the best we can.

### **I am a LTC who hasn't had a contact yet, what do I do?**

Walgreens and CVS are still working to reach all the over 4900 facilities enrolled in part B of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program to get them scheduled for their first clinics. If the facility in question is a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), they were activated as part of Part A of the program and they should have been contacted already. If they are a SNF and they have not yet been contacted, they can reach out to MDHHS. All of the "other" facilities (these include assisted living, CCRC, personal care homes, residential care, adult family home, adult foster home, IDD, HUD 202, Veteran's homes) were activated as part of Part B and they are still being contacted. They should,

hopefully, hear from their matched CVS or Walgreens partner by the end of the week. We appreciate the facilities' patience and just know that our pharmacy partners are working extremely hard to contact all the enrolled facilities and get their clinics scheduled.

### **How do I know if I am a frontline essential worker?**

A frontline essential worker is an individual whose job duties are critical to providing sustainment of life safety and protection to the public. Their role will place them at substantially higher risk of exposure to potentially infectious persons.

### **If I am a frontline essential worker, how will I know how to get vaccinated?**

If you are an essential worker, you will be notified by your employer. Your employer should assist you with arrangements for where you would likely receive your vaccination.

### **Why are Phase 1B and 1C starting at the same time?**

Only parts of Phase 1B and 1C are starting at the same time. This was done for several reasons but MDHHS felt it important to be sure to target vaccinations to populations most affected by severe COVID cases. The greatest number of severe COVID cases and deaths occur in individuals over the age of 64 years of age.

### **I am not in one of these groups, how long do I have to wait?**

There are any factors that will play into when the vaccine will be made available to the general public. The largest factor is the amount of vaccine available to first vaccinate the priority groups. We hope we will be able to offer vaccinations to the general public sometime during the summer.

### **Why are essential workers receiving the vaccine before the general public?**

Essential workers keep systems critical to public health and safety functioning. Workers in essential and specific industries are considered part of America's critical infrastructure, as defined by the [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency](#). Many of these workers have jobs that require significant person-to-person interactions. Current data show that many of these workers are at increased risk for getting COVID-19. Early vaccine access is critical not only to protect them from becoming ill, but also to maintain the essential services they provide to U.S. communities.

### **How are essential workers identified and prioritized to receive the vaccine?**

MDHHS, Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, local public health and local emergency management will consider the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Program as well as continuity of operations plans in prioritization of some workers.

Vaccination will be coordinated through local public health. In addition, work is underway to leverage existing relationships with Michigan corporations that could leverage their own occupational health programs to implement vaccine administration when the appropriate phase is initiated.



### **Why are school staff and child care providers receiving the vaccine before the general public?**

Schools and child care contribute to children's growth and well-being by providing educational instruction; supporting the development of social and emotional skills; creating a safe environment for learning; addressing nutritional needs; and facilitating physical activity. Vaccination of these staff is essential to improve the capacity to have in-person instruction.

### **Will people who are homeless receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Local health departments will coordinate with Federally Qualified Health Centers and other providers to administer the vaccine to homeless individuals.

### **Will tribal populations receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Vaccine will be administered to tribal members through their tribal health clinics.

### **Will migrant workers receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Local health departments will coordinate with Federally Qualified Health Centers and other providers to administer the vaccine.

### **Why are children younger than age 16 not included in the vaccine plan?**

We await further guidance on whether young children will be recommended for vaccination. Vaccination of young children is not recommended because of limited data on the vaccine safety and efficacy in this group at this time. Young children should still make sure they are up to date on their other important life-saving immunizations.

## **Protecting your privacy**

### **What information will be collected about me when I receive the vaccine?**

When vaccines are administered, your name, address, and vaccine given are required to be reported to the state's registry, called the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR).

### **Will information collected about me be shared with anyone?**

Providers and local health departments who have access to the MCIR (after signing the required MCIR Usage Agreement that governs protection of the information) can view a person's record to know what vaccines they have received.

### **What information will be shared? With whom?**

Michigan will share vaccination information with the CDC but in de-identified aggregate form (i.e., not containing person-level information such as name, date of birth or address).

## Where can I get more information?

More information is available about coronavirus on the [State of Michigan coronavirus website](#).

If you have additional questions, you can contact the COVID Hotline at 1-888-535-6136.

For more information about coronavirus review:

- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [CHOP Preventing COVID-19](#)

Providers who wish to enroll in n [Michigan's COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#).