

COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ

Last Updated 12/2/2020

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General Vaccine Information

1. Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccines are being made available in phases to assure the highest benefit to the community. Phase 1A will focus primarily on frontline health care workers and other emergency responders at high risk for infection by SARS-CoV2. This will safeguard the healthcare system and preserve the ability to provide care for those who need it. This initial phase will expand to include other essential workers and people at very high risk for hospitalization or death from COVID-19. It is anticipated that supplies of the vaccine(s) could be sufficient to provide to the general population in the late Spring or early Summer of 2021.

2. What are the risks from the COVID-19 vaccines?

The risk of any vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small but possible. A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause a serious problem, such as a severe allergic reaction. The COVID-19 vaccines are new, and some effects may not yet be known.

3. NEW 12/2/2020: What should I do if I have a severe reaction?

We routinely give vaccines in controlled settings and always have medications and equipment available for managing allergic reactions at each vaccination site. We may call 9-1-1 in case of severe reaction. If you experience a medical emergency, such as trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.

4. NEW 12/2/2020: Can those who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant get the vaccine?

Those who are pregnant or those trying to become pregnant and those who are breastfeeding were not included in vaccine trials and the risk to the baby is unknown. Discussing the risks and benefits of the vaccine should be considered with your healthcare provider.

5. Will there be enough vaccines for everyone?

There may be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines before the end of 2020, but supply is expected to increase gradually throughout the first half of 2021. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as quantities are available.

6. When is FDA approval expected?

Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of some COVID-19 vaccines is expected as early as December 2020. During a declared Public Health Emergency, the FDA has the authority to allow the use of new medical products and/or new uses of previously approved products. EUAs are generally used in emergency situations to diagnose, treat, or prevent serious or life-threatening conditions when

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there are no adequate, approved, and/or available alternatives. The use of a medical product, such as the COVID-19 vaccine(s), may require the recipient to sign paperwork acknowledging that they understand that the product is part of an EUA.

7. How long after receiving the vaccine will I develop immunity?

It is currently believed that immunity will develop within weeks of receiving the SECOND dose of the vaccine. Studies to further explore this and the duration of the immunity are ongoing continue.

8. How many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?

Most of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in Phase 3 clinical trials in the United States require two doses to be effective. There is one vaccine currently in testing that requires only one injection.

9. How long is the COVID-19 vaccine effective?

We will not know how long immunity lasts until we have vaccines and recipients are followed over longer periods of time. This will also help determine whether further booster doses are required.

10. NEW 12/2/2020: Will those who are vaccinated test positive for COVID following vaccination?

You will not test positive for COVID but will test positive for the antibodies.

11. What is herd immunity? What percentage of the population needs to get vaccinated to have herd immunity to COVID-19?

Herd immunity (or community immunity) is a term to describe when enough individuals have protection – either from previous infection or vaccination – that there are so few susceptible people in a community that it is unlikely a virus or bacteria can continue to spread widely and infect others. As a result, everyone within the community is protected even if some people do not have any protection themselves. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease. At this time, experts do not know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19, but current estimates are that at least 75% of people within a community will need to have immunity to begin controlling the pandemic.

12. How can I learn more?

- Carefully review all materials provided to you when you are notified that you are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine BEFORE you schedule your vaccination.
- Visit the following online resources:
 - o [UW Health's COVID website](#)
 - o [Wisconsin Department of Health Services \(DHS\) website](#)
 - o [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#)

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UW Health Plan for Staff Vaccination

13. What is UW Health's plan for vaccinating its employees? When are we likely to receive the first doses?

UW Health will vaccinate employees according to Federal & State guidelines about vaccine phasing. Within this guidance, UW Health will be prioritizing those at the highest risk of work-related exposure to COVID-19, who will be offered the first available vaccines.

14. Are all UW Health staff and providers required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

- All UW Health staff, faculty, students and other affiliated individuals must EITHER receive the vaccine OR complete and file a declination form.
- Staff who choose to decline the COVID-19 vaccine for medical reasons, religious or personal conviction/belief or personal reasons must complete a COVID-19 Declination form in Service Now which will be available to staff at a future date.
- Even if you have previously completed a UW Health Religious or Personal Conviction/Belief Waiver for another vaccine, you must either receive the COVID-19 vaccine or submit a declination form.

15. NEW 12/2/2020: If I agree to receive the COVID vaccine, can I change my mind prior to receiving it?

UW Health's goal is to promote the best and most efficient use of our ability to vaccinate. Staff are strongly encouraged to review the available information regarding the vaccines prior to making their decision in order to minimize cancellations and re-scheduling of their appointments.

16. Which vaccine(s) will we receive, and can I choose which manufacturer of the vaccine I receive?

Currently, we do not know which vaccines, or how much of each, we will receive. Due to the complexity and supply of vaccine distribution, you will not be able to select which vaccine you receive. You will need to receive the 2nd dose from the same manufacturer once you start with a particular vaccine. Currently, it is not anticipated that these vaccines will be considered interchangeable. Very limited requests for a specific vaccine *may* be considered only if there is a clinical reason for the request.

17. NEW 12/2/2020: If staff refuse vaccination, can they be redeployed to non-patient care?

All employees will have the option to decline the COVID-19 vaccination. If you choose to decline the COVID-19 vaccine, changes to job duties will only be considered if requested through the ADA accommodation process. An accommodation requested via the ADA process does not guarantee it will be approved. It is important to note that the vaccine is one layer of protection against transmission of COVID-19. Vaccination does not change the need to be diligent with hand hygiene and then proper use of personal protective equipment as outlined previously on the COVID-19 site for faculty and staff.

18. How will the initial quantity of vaccines received affect our plans to vaccinate our workforce?

UW Health is preparing to give all the vaccine we receive in a timely fashion and will devote the resources needed to ensure this occurs. We want everyone to be able to be vaccinated and will do

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everything we can within our control to make sure it happens as quickly as possible. The potentially unpredictable supply chain may require us to be flexible in how we schedule administration. Please watch organizational and individual communication patiently and diligently to stay up to date.

19. If I have a question or concern about how my job has been prioritized to receive a vaccine, who can I speak to?

If you have a question or concern regarding the prioritization for your job to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, you should speak with your leader. If you do not feel comfortable speaking with your direct leader, you are encouraged to speak with another leader within your department/operation. Additional information regarding the [CDC's vaccination recommendations can be found here](#).

20. I previously declined the vaccine, but I would now like to receive it. How will I be prioritized?

You would be placed back into the prioritization process based on your job's prioritization group.

21. If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated? How long does natural immunity last?

There is not enough information to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again, and some people have been infected more than once, especially if their initial infection was mild. Given these unknowns, we do recommend that employees be vaccinated even if they had previously been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Post-Vaccination

22. If I have been vaccinated for COVID-19 or the patient I have contact with has been vaccinated, do I still need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Yes. In either case, we do not expect any vaccine to be completely protective for all recipients. It is always best practice to mask coughing patients and wear the recommended protective equipment to control spread of communicable disease.

23. How will UW Health change its current COVID-19 practices based on the level of employee vaccination?

It is important to note that the vaccine is one layer of protection against transmission of COVID-19. Vaccination does not change the need to be diligent with hand hygiene and then proper use of personal protective equipment as outlined previously on the COVID-19 site for faculty and staff.

24. Should I still wear a mask and practice social distancing if I have received two doses of the vaccine?

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, frequent hand washing and staying at least 6 feet away from others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following the CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from getting and spreading SARS-CoV2. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change infection control recommendations. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities will also affect this decision.

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Compensation and Benefits

25. Does UW Health or my insurance cover the cost of the vaccine?

UW Health will provide the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to employees. If you receive your vaccine outside of UW Health, you will need to work with your health insurance regarding coverage.

26. NEW 12/2/2020: If I am working from home and travel to a location outside of my home to receive the vaccine, will this be considered paid time?

If you are traveling during business hours, this would be considered paid time; eligible mileage is paid per [Policy 1.14](#). If you are traveling to the vaccine location at the start of your scheduled workday or traveling home from the vaccine location at the end of your scheduled workday, this would be considered your regular commute and is not paid time or mileage. Staff should attempt to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the nearest available location. If you choose an appointment outside of work hours for personal reasons, you would not be paid mileage or time since this was not completed during your shift.

27. If I have side effects from the vaccine and am unable to work, will I be compensated for the time that I miss work?

If you have side effects from the vaccine you should report those side effects to Employee Health Services and complete an Employee Occupational Injury and Illness Report. Worker's compensation benefits for related medical treatment and lost wages will be determined by working with your worker's compensation team.

Sources:

[8 Things to Know about Vaccine Planning](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

[How CDC is Making COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations](#)