

COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: **December 18, 2020**

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.

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

Yes, as of December 11, 2020 the FDA has given emergency use authorization (EUA) for one vaccine and it is expected that more will follow shortly.

When will the vaccine be ready for public distribution?

The first allotment of vaccine for [Phase 1a](#) has been delivered to New Hampshire and is currently being distributed to populations within that phase. It is expected that it may take several weeks to vaccinate all of the people in Phase 1a.

When approved, how many doses will New Hampshire receive?

For the first shipment New Hampshire received (12, 675 doses) which is being distributed to locations for vaccination of those people in Phase 1a. Equitable allocation of vaccine is important to NH DHHS and decision-making around vaccine distribution will be informed by national guidelines with consideration for ethical and medical considerations.

How is the vaccine given?

Both vaccines are injected into a muscle (“intramuscular”). For adults, vaccine will be 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 (once the Moderna vaccine is approved), 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 Pfizer vaccine, can I get the second shot with another brand?

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

Where do I get a vaccine?

It depends on when you are recommended to get the vaccine (which phase of vaccine distribution you are in). When there is sufficient supply for everyone, you will likely be able to get it at your primary health care provider or at another location such as a pharmacy or public clinic. The State of NH is working hard to provide as many vaccination opportunities as supplies and logistics allow for while decreasing any health disparities.

When will I get it?

The vaccine will not be available for everyone until 2021. The first limited doses available will be provided to high and most - risk health workers, first responders, and those residents and staff in long-term care facilities in Phase 1a. As final national recommendations are made, vaccine population categories will be made public.

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.

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.

Will I need to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. Vaccine doses will be available to the American people at no cost regardless of insurance status. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee or office visit, and payment could be the responsibility of the patient. However, most public and private insurance companies will cover that fee. It is always best to talk with your health insurer or primary care provider about your specific coverage, **but it is expected there will be no patient cost sharing.**

What if I don't have insurance?

Vaccines will be provided at no cost.

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.

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.

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, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying 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.

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. National recommendations will be made based on research as to whether the vaccine is safe in people with compromised immune systems.

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.

Where will I be able to get the vaccine?

For Phase 1a, vaccine will be provided by hospitals for their health workers, CVS and Walgreens for long-term care facilities, and at 13 fixed sites throughout NH for first responders and health workers not working for a hospital and for those long term care facilities not enrolled with CVS or Walgreens. In future phases, vaccine will be available in New Hampshire through health care providers, pharmacies, and special vaccination clinics, depending on your risk for disease.

I run a local pharmacy. Can I play a part in vaccine distribution?

Maybe. We appreciate each inquiry related to working with us for COVID-19 vaccination. Federal and state plans have already identified retail pharmacies that will improve access to vaccination for the public. If you own or manage an independent pharmacy, please email covidvaccine@dhhs.nh.gov for more information about how to enroll as a vaccine provider.

How is NH Department of Public Health Services (DPHS) preparing for vaccine distribution?

For months, NH DPHS has been engaged on a multidisciplinary, careful, and evidence-based planning process for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. The process of vaccinating NH residents — in stages based on risk criteria provided by scientific oversight agencies — is dynamic. NH DPHS has lead the vaccination

initiative with healthcare and other partners, and with oversight of ethics experts and with attention to equity. Preparation efforts include making best estimates of the dates and quantities of vaccine availability, scheduling populations to be prioritized while vaccine supply is limited, identifying vaccine sites and vaccinators, training and authorizing additional vaccinators, creating public information campaigns, and closely monitoring the process and outcome.

Special efforts will be necessary to reach populations at elevated risk and to develop trust with people who have concerns about vaccine safety. NH DPHS is committed to a process that is transparent and fully grounded in science, which is critical to ensuring public confidence in 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.

Can children get the vaccine?

Children will be likely given the opportunity to get the vaccine in the future. However, the data we currently have is based on trials with non-pregnant adults. As clinical trials expand, we will know more about the safety of the vaccine in children.

I am pregnant. Can I get the vaccine?

Maybe. Pregnant women should first have a discussion with their primary care or prenatal provider to determine if vaccination is appropriate for you.

The CDC website has additional information on COVID-19 vaccines.

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](#).

Additional resources:

- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#),
- [Journal of American Medical Association \(JAMA\)](#)
- [Public Health Communications Collaborative](#)