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## CAREGIVERS: Ohio COVID-19 Vaccine Program

**Q: How is the COVID-19 vaccine distributed to caregivers?**

**A:** Our guiding principles are to distribute this vaccine safely, equitably and transparently, with an understanding that the greatest need is to maintain patient care. Based on COVID-19 vaccine supply and federal and state guidelines, in late 2020 we began distributing the vaccine to our caregivers in a phased approach.

On March 29, 2021, all Ohioans age 16 and older became eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Based on vaccine supply, caregivers and patients will be notified through [MyChart](#) when there are vaccine appointments available. Please ensure you have an active MyChart account so you are able to schedule a vaccine appointment.

**Q: How do I schedule a vaccine appointment(s)?**

**A:** If you are a Cleveland Clinic patient who has a MyChart account:

1. If you are eligible to schedule your vaccine appointment, you will see an announcement on your homepage to schedule when you log in to [MyChart](#).
2. After starting the scheduling process, Cleveland Clinic locations will display available appointments. You may select multiple locations at once to view all available appointments. **Be sure to scroll all the way down.**
3. After selecting your preferred date and time, enter "COVID Vaccine" as the reason for your visit, review your *Visit Instructions*, and click *Schedule*.
4. Your appointment will be confirmed, and you can review your appointment details at any time in your MyChart account. Patients will have the ability to cancel and reschedule appointments.
5. If you are unable to access MyChart, call 216.444.2538 for help. Caregivers are available 24/7/365.

Please note vaccine appointments are limited. We will continue to open appointment slots when we have vaccine available. We appreciate your patience during this process.

Individuals who **are not a Cleveland Clinic patient** can call 216.448.4117 for help scheduling their vaccine. Schedulers are available Tuesday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. ET.

**Q: Why are appointments limited?**

**A:** The federal government allocates vaccine doses to each state, which then allocate it to each designated vaccine provider. The available vaccine supply is limited and has not been enough to vaccinate everyone who would like to receive it. As Cleveland Clinic receives vaccine shipments, we make appointments available.

**Q: Is there a standby or waitlist for caregivers to receive the vaccine?**

**A:** If patients do not show for appointments or cancel, we want to ensure every vaccine dose we have is used. An online standby list has been created for caregivers who wish to receive a vaccine when extra doses are available. The standby list locations include Cleveland Clinic Akron General Health & Wellness Center in Bath, Fairview Hospital, Hillcrest North Campus (Across the street from Hillcrest Hospital), Langston Hughes Community Health & Education Center, the Business Operations Center in Independence and Medina Hospital. The standby list clears on Sundays and reopens again Monday morning, so interested caregivers will need to resubmit their information each Monday. [Read more.](#)

**Q. Where can I find a non-Cleveland Clinic vaccine provider?**

**A:** The State of Ohio website has a portal, [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov), where you can search by county, ZIP code and population to find a provider in your area. Providers may include local health departments, federally-qualified health centers, as well as some retail pharmacies.

The State of Ohio is also sponsoring 18 [mass vaccination clinics](#) to ensure all Ohioans have access to COVID-19 vaccine as it becomes more widely available.

The Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University opened March 17 and operates seven days a week and runs for eight weeks. Ohioans can sign up at [gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov) (open using Chrome). Enter ZIP code 44115 in the search field.

**Q: How can I update my medical record at Cleveland Clinic if I received the vaccine elsewhere?**

**A:** If you've received a COVID-19 vaccine outside of Cleveland Clinic's vaccination program and have NOT had a visit with a Cleveland Clinic provider since your vaccination, we encourage you to share a photo of your CDC vaccination card with Occupational Health. With photo documentation, we are able to manually update ReadySet to ensure your medical record is up-to-date.

If you were vaccinated outside of a Cleveland Clinic vaccination site and you have NOT been to a Cleveland Clinic provider, please complete the following steps:

1. Take a clear photo of your completed CDC vaccination card
2. Email the photo to [COVID19@ccf.org](mailto:COVID19@ccf.org)
3. Include your full name, date of birth and employee ID in the body of the email

If you were vaccinated outside of a Cleveland Clinic vaccination site AND have visited a Cleveland Clinic provider after your vaccinations, no action is needed.

**Q: What should I do if I have side effects to the vaccine?**

**A:** Some commonly reported side effects are injection site swelling and tenderness, fever, muscle pain, headache and fatigue. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) to help with these symptoms. Most of these symptoms are more common with the second dose. Note that all caregivers and patients are monitored at the vaccine distribution location for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine for possible immediate hypersensitivity reactions.

If you are concerned about any symptoms, or side effects related to the vaccine, contact the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline at 216.445.8246.

All caregivers who receive the vaccine are also encouraged to enroll in [v-safe, a monitoring program managed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

**Q: If I have side effects from the vaccine that cause me to miss work, will I need to use my PTO or receive an occurrence?**

**A:** If a caregiver is feeling ill and needs to stay home, they will use PTO for the time away from work. An occurrence is recorded if the call-off is not scheduled.

**Q: Do I need to continue masking and social distancing after getting the vaccine?**

**A:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued its [first guidance on public health recommendations](#) for Americans fully vaccinated from COVID-19. The guidance recommends that fully vaccinated people continue to take precautions, like masking and social distancing, in public. The CDC considers a person to be fully vaccinated two weeks after they have received the second of the two-dose vaccines, Pfizer or Moderna, or two weeks after receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

It's important to note that these guidelines do not apply to healthcare settings. Our current masking policies remain in place. [Read more from the CDC on guidance for healthcare settings.](#)

Fully vaccinated people should still watch out for symptoms of COVID, especially if they've been around someone who is sick. And those who develop symptoms should get tested and stay away from others.

## PATIENTS & GENERAL PUBLIC: Ohio COVID-19 Vaccine Program

**Q: Which Cleveland Clinic locations are scheduling appointments for COVID-19 vaccines?**

**A:** [Visit our website](#) for an up-to-date list of locations where patients can schedule their COVID-19 vaccine appointments.

**Q: Can Ohio residents who are not Cleveland Clinic patients receive the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes. We are now vaccinating any Ohio resident. Individuals who **are not a Cleveland Clinic patient** can call 216.448.4117 for help scheduling their vaccine. Schedulers are available Tuesday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. ET.

**Q: Can a provider sign their patients up or submit an order for a patient to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** No. When we have vaccine available for Cleveland Clinic patients, they will receive a notification from MyChart that a scheduling ticket is available and they may make their appointment.

**Q: If a patient received their first COVID-19 vaccine dose elsewhere, can they receive their second dose at Cleveland Clinic?**

**A:** The authorized Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are two doses. Patients must receive both doses for maximum benefit. It is best to receive both doses of the vaccine from the same provider and location to ensure the correct product. If a patient has received their first dose elsewhere and makes a second dose appointment at Cleveland Clinic, we cannot guarantee that we will have the appropriate product for them, and may need to cancel their appointment. Note: The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is administered in one dose.

**Q: Should my teenager be vaccinated?**

**A:** Beginning March 29, all Ohioans age 16 and over are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, per Ohio Department of Health guidance.

- The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for those ages 16 and older
- The Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines are authorized for those 18 and older

We encourage all eligible individuals to get vaccinated as soon as they can. Vaccinating everyone who is eligible is important to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Teenagers under the age of 18 who are coming to a Cleveland Clinic vaccination site must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or provide written consent from their parent or guardian in order to receive the vaccine.

**Q: When will children be able to get vaccinated?**

**A:** Several companies are expanding their vaccine clinical trials to include younger children and babies as young as 6 months old. At this time, we don't have a clear answer as to when a COVID vaccine will be available to those younger than 16.

**Q: Does Cleveland Clinic vaccinate hospitalized patients?**

**A:** Beginning March 16, patients admitted to main campus, Fairview, Hillcrest and Medina are eligible to receive the second dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Due to the storage requirements and limited supply of vaccines, this inpatient service is restricted to locations with outpatient COVID-19 vaccination clinics on site. This process allows inpatients the ability to complete their COVID-19 vaccine series in a timely manner, if they are anticipated to be admitted when they are past due for their second dose. [Read more.](#)

## General Vaccine Information

**Q: What processes does Cleveland Clinic use to ensure safe vaccine distribution?**

**A:** This is a complex and tightly managed process unlike any other vaccination program we've provided. Cleveland Clinic is following all federal and state guidelines to ensure safe distribution of the vaccine. We are following a number of processes to ensure safety, including:

- Strict temperature monitoring of vaccines once they are received, transferred to storage and distributed to the vaccination sites.
- Additional training of personnel administering the vaccines on the reconstitution, temperature stability and side effects of the vaccine.
- Required 15-minute waiting period (monitoring) in the vaccination site after receiving the vaccine.
- Presence of equipment and personnel trained to deliver immediate medical treatment in the event of a severe vaccine reaction, such as anaphylaxis.
- Reporting to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) any vaccination administration errors, series adverse events, or any cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death. For more information on VAERS, go [here](#).
- Distribution of education materials to vaccinated individuals on what to expect after a vaccination, and contact information to be used if they experience an adverse reaction. Each vaccinated individual has the option to sign up with the [v-safe health checker app](#) that sends symptom checks and reminders on the second dose.
- Caregivers experiencing symptoms following the first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine can speak with a nurse on the Cleveland Clinic Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline by calling 216.445.8246.

**Q: Which vaccine does Cleveland Clinic distribute?**

**A:** Cleveland Clinic is currently offering Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines and distributes vaccines following state guidelines as products are granted an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**Q: Can I choose which vaccine I receive?**

**A:** We do not guarantee that a specific product will be available at any location at any given time. Due to the storage requirements and limited supply of vaccines, we will not be able to offer patients a choice of which vaccine they receive.

**Q: How many doses of the vaccine are needed?**

**A:** The COVID-19 mRNA Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is administered in one dose. The vaccines are not interchangeable. Each person receiving a vaccine must get both doses with the same vaccine product from the same manufacturer. Pfizer is typically scheduled at a 21-day interval whereas Moderna is scheduled at 28. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices allows for up to 42 days between the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccines.

**Q: If I already had COVID-19, am I eligible to receive the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes, it is still recommended for you to receive the vaccine. You may choose to wait 90 days after getting infected, as reinfection within that period is uncommon. You should wait to schedule the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Until you are cleared from isolation precautions.
- For 90 days if you had any COVID-19 treatment with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.

**Q: If I have had a prior allergic reaction to the flu vaccine, should I receive a vaccine for COVID-19?**

**A:** You are still eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Because of reports of anaphylactic reactions in persons vaccinated outside of clinical trials, it is recommended that individuals who have had a severe allergic reaction to any previous vaccine discuss the nature of their reaction with their provider before scheduling a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Q: What side effects can I expect from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** The mRNA vaccines stimulate your immune system; therefore, you may experience some mild to moderate symptoms including fever, muscle/joint aches, headache, fatigue, chills, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. You may also have local symptoms at the injection site including pain, swelling, redness at injection site and localized lymph node swelling.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, while not an mRNA vaccine, has similar side effects including injection site reactions (pain, redness of the skin and swelling), as well as general side effects like headache, fatigue, muscle aches, nausea and fever.

**Q: Is there a difference between the first and second dose of the vaccines?**

**A:** You are more likely to experience side effects and symptoms after the second dose. Most side effects reported in the clinical trials were mild to moderate. Side effects typically occur 24-48 hours after vaccine administration and can last 24-48 hours. Note: The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is administered in one dose.

**Q: What if I have a severe reaction, such as anaphylaxis, to a COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** You should not receive the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine until you have discussed your reaction with your provider. You may be referred to an allergist for additional evaluation.

**Q: If I am pregnant or breastfeeding, can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** Getting the vaccine while pregnant is a personal choice. Individuals who are pregnant should talk to their physician to help make a decision together. Occupational Health will require an attestation from your provider that you have discussed the benefits and risks of vaccination. Cleveland Clinic OB providers can provide this letter to their patients who are caregivers.

Pregnant women are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection. Compared with the non-pregnant woman, pregnant women have increased risk of hospitalization, ICU admission and mechanical ventilation. In addition, public health precautions like masking, social distancing and hand hygiene, the vaccine is very important in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

**Q: How often will I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine? Will a booster be needed after the second dose?**

**A:** It is unknown at this point whether additional boosters will be necessary.

## Science Behind the COVID-19 Vaccine

**Q: What scientific data is available about the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines?**

**A:** You can find the available data at [clevelandclinic.org/covidvaccine](https://clevelandclinic.org/covidvaccine).

**Q: Have the vaccine(s) gone through appropriate clinical trials?**

**A:** The FDA assessed the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines for safety and side effects and deemed they have met the standards [for Emergency Use Authorization](#).

While an EUA is not a full FDA license for use, it does not suggest that a product was rushed through approval. It simply means its application for review has been prioritized due to the crisis nature of the pandemic. Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson will continue to follow the trial participants for two years to assess any future safety concerns.

**Q: Where can I find more information about vaccine safety and effectiveness?**

- Learn more about the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine on the [FDA website](#).
- Learn more about the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine on the [FDA website](#)
- Learn more about the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on the [FDA website](#)

**Q: What do we know about the short- and long-term effects of the vaccines?**

**A:** In the short-term, people may have mild side effects which last 1-3 days, including fatigue, headache, pain or swelling at the injection site and muscle or joint pain. We will know more about the long-term effects of the vaccines as time goes on. If you are concerned about any symptoms or side effects from receiving the vaccine, call the Cleveland Clinic Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline at 216.445.8246.

Find more information on [vaccine development](#) and about this type of vaccine [here](#).

**Q: Did clinical trials include individuals who had COVID-19?**

**A:** The trials did try to exclude previously infected patients with COVID-19, and those with an active infection. Both manufacturers did evaluate a subgroup of patients who received the vaccine, even though they were previously infected. The vaccine effectiveness was the same.

**Q: How long does the immunization last?**

**A:** After a person receives the COVID-19 vaccination, we do not know how long protection against infection lasts beyond two months. Also, we do not know if vaccination protects against transmitting the virus to other people who are without immunity. For these reasons, vaccine recipients must continue to mask, maintain social distance and practice hand hygiene.

**Q: What do we know about this vaccine in patients with cancer or immunosuppression?**

**A:** We do not have this specific data at this time, but the CDC recommends that these patients can still receive the vaccine. If an individual is immunocompromised or takes medications/treatments that suppress the immune system, they should discuss the benefits and risks of the vaccine with their provider.

**Q: Is there any signal in the existing data that there are differences in vaccine effectiveness by race or ethnicity?**

**A:** Among different ethnic subgroups in the trials, similar high effectiveness was seen after receiving the vaccine. The ongoing trials will continue to monitor this among different racial/ethnic backgrounds, age and medical conditions.