COVID-19 Vaccine
Healthcare Provider Frequently Asked Questions
September 2, 2022

New/Updated Information is highlighted in yellow.

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Is a COVID-19 vaccine necessary?
COVID-19 can be a minor illness in some or lead to severe disease or even death in previously healthy people. This means, everyone should take the virus seriously — if not for themselves, then for those around them.

Many treatments and medications are being studied, but there is no cure. Prevention is key. Vaccination is an important step in helping to prevent this illness and its potentially devastating consequences.

What vaccines are approved or authorized for use?
The following are the COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States:
- Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty
- Moderna/Spikevax
- Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen
- Novavax


What is Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty?
On July 8, the FDA licensed Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 in individuals ages 12 through 15 years. The expansion of the license means that the emergency use authorization for use of this vaccine in this age group no longer applies.

Once vaccines are approved by the FDA, companies can market the vaccines under brand names. COMIRNATY is the brand name for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. After FDA approval, the FDA-authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for individuals ages 12 years and older can now be marketed as COMIRNATY. No change was made to the vaccine’s formula with the name change.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine label remains for use in authorized age groups (6 months through 11 years).

What is Moderna/Spikevax?
Moderna/Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine was licensed/approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on January 31, 2022, for individuals ages 18 years and older. Once vaccines are approved by the FDA, companies can market the vaccines under brand names. Spikevax is the brand name for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. The FDA-authorized Moderna COVID-19
vaccine for individuals ages 18 years and older will now be marketed as Spikevax. No change has been made to the vaccine’s formula with the name change.

The Moderna vaccine label remains for use in authorized age groups (6 months through 17 years).

**What is Novavax vaccine?**
The CDC recently accepted the Novavax vaccine for emergency use authorization for adults 12 years and older. Novavax is a two-dose, protein-based COVID-19 vaccine that is currently being used in more than 40 countries and has been authorized by the European Union and the World Health Organization.

Novavax will now be the fourth COVID-19 vaccine available in the U.S., in addition to Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. As a protein-based vaccine, Novavax is another option for people who are allergic to one of the components in a mRNA or viral-vector vaccine. The vaccine is currently authorized as a primary series only, and not as a booster dose.

Regulators authorized the vaccine following an extensive review of clinical trials and safety and effectiveness data.

**How is Novavax different from the other COVID-19 vaccines?**
The Novavax vaccine is created using more traditional protein-based technology for vaccine development, unlike the other vaccines currently available in the United States (the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines and viral-vector Johnson & Johnson vaccine).

The Novavax vaccine uses a combination of purified coronavirus spike proteins and an immune-boosting stimulant called an adjuvant (common in many vaccines) to strengthen the body’s immune response against COVID-19. Vaccines using protein subunits have been used for more than 30 years in the United States, beginning with the first licensed hepatitis B vaccine. Other protein subunit vaccines used in the United States today include those to protect against influenza and whooping cough (acellular pertussis). For more information on how Novavax and other COVID-19 vaccines work, visit [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/how-they-work.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/how-they-work.html).

**Can children six months and older receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**
Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are now recommended for everyone 6 months and older and boosters for everyone 5 years and older, if eligible. The FDA authorized a three-dose primary series of Pfizer vaccine for children 6 months through 4 years of age and a two-dose primary series of Moderna vaccine for children 6 months through 5 years of age.

On June 23, 2022, the CDC also recommended the use of Moderna vaccine for ages 6 through 17 years.

Parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment to get their child vaccinated!
Are the COVID-19 vaccines given to children the same as the vaccines given to adults?

The COVID-19 vaccines for children have the same active ingredients as the vaccines given to adults. However, some children receive a smaller, age-appropriate dose that is the right size for them. The smaller doses were rigorously tested and found to create the needed immune response for each age group. Your child should get the vaccine made for their age group.

For vaccine product presentations (age of use, storage and handling, cap color), please visit https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/summary-interim-clinical-considerations.pdf.

Why should children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Just like adults, children can become severely ill from COVID-19, be hospitalized, and even die. Children can experience short- and long-term health complications that can affect their mental and physical health and quality of life.
- There is no way to predict if a child will develop a severe or mild case of COVID-19. Even healthy children without underlying medical conditions can get severe COVID-19 or suffer from long-term health complications.
- Vaccinating this younger age group helps lessen the strain on families by providing greater confidence with children participating in childcare, school, and other activities.
- COVID-19 vaccination reduces the strain on the healthcare system.
- Children who have previously had COVID-19 should still get vaccinated, as vaccination offers added protection.

Parents/guardians can get their children vaccinated by calling their healthcare provider to make an appointment, visiting covid19.nj.gov/finder, or contacting the COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center at 855-568-0545 (10a-6p, M-F; 10a-4p, Sa).

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines and children consider sharing the following information with your patients, https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/protect_child_covid19_vax.pdf.

How can I get vaccinated?

There are multiple ways to get an appointment including:

1. Use the NJ Vaccine Appointment Finder to find vaccination locations near you with available appointments.
2. Attend a pop-up or mobile vaccination event in your community.
3. Register with the NJ Vaccine Scheduling System to be notified when an appointment is available to you at vaccine locations that use the State's Vaccine Scheduling System. If you need assistance registering with the NJVSS, please call 855-568-0545.
4. Seniors 65+ can call the senior-specific hotline at 855-429-1168 to schedule dedicated vaccine appointments.
5. Veterans, their spouses, and their caregivers may be eligible for vaccines through the VA. Learn more here.

Note: Please verify requirements with a vaccination site before visiting or making an appointment. Some require proof of residency within a specific county or municipality. In addition, minors must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to be vaccinated.

I have some patients who are homebound. Will they be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?
A person who is homebound or their healthcare provider/caregiver may request an in-home vaccination appointment by completing a form at covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax (English) or covid19.nj.gov/homeboundvax-es (Spanish).

For assistance completing the form by phone, please call the NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center at 1-855-568-0545.

Can you tell me more about the NJVSS? Is my information private?
The NJVSS is a secure online website developed by the NJ Department of Health for public health purposes. The NJVSS is a system that allows you to sign-up to make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

You will be asked to provide personal information (name, address, gender, race, and email), medical screening and occupation information. This helps to determine your eligibility for the vaccine. NJVSS will send you e-mail reminders about your appointment and reminders about getting the 2nd dose. The NJVSS also lets you make an appointment at a vaccination location most convenient for you.

The information collected on the NJVSS is used for public health purposes only AND to ensure that same person returns for the 2nd dose of the same vaccine. For more information, visit https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine and https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/.

Some of my patients used the NJVSS to receive the vaccine at my facility. Who do I contact for technical assistance with using NJVSS?
Providers should email NJVaxReporting@doh.nj.gov for any issues or questions relating to NJVSS.

I have patients who lost their COVID-19 vaccination card or need additional proof of vaccination. What advice can you give them?
Patients may be able to get another copy of their COVID-19 vaccine card at the site where they were vaccinated; however, not all sites provide this service and some locations have closed. Alternatively, you can print your patient’s official immunization record for them. Please include the COVID-19 vaccine lot number for the patient. The official record will list all vaccines that your patient has received and the dates of administration.
Another option is for individuals to download the Docket mobile app (COVID-19 vaccines only) or submit a request to NJIIS. For specific instructions, visit [https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#/requestImmunizationRecord](https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#/requestImmunizationRecord).

**Where can my patients find information on public transportation to vaccine locations?**

Through the Department’s VAXRIDE initiative, NJ TRANSIT supports New Jerseyans in their efforts to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Visit [https://www.njtransit.com/vaxride](https://www.njtransit.com/vaxride) to find vaccination sites that are conveniently served by NJ TRANSIT bus, train and light rail routes.

In addition, NJ 211 is offering free rides to and from vaccination sites in partnership with United Way Worldwide and Lyft. Rides are available wherever Lyft operates in New Jersey and is available to everyone including those with collapsible wheelchairs and walkers. To request a free ride, call 211 or text 898-211, or visit 211 to learn more.

**Number of Doses and Boosters—For Most People (General Population)**

**Are there new booster dose available?**

The CDC recently accepted the FDA’s authorization of two new bivalent COVID-19 booster doses. The booster doses are referred to as bivalent because they will help to protect against two variants--components of the original COVID-19 virus strain **AND** the Omicron variant.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, bivalent is authorized for use as a single booster dose in **individuals 12 years of age and older**.

- The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, bivalent is authorized for use as single booster dose in **individuals 18 years of age and older**.

A single booster dose with an updated bivalent COVID-19 vaccine is designed to provide broad protection against COVID-19 and better protection against COVID-19 caused by the currently circulating Omicron variant.

**When can providers order the bivalent boosters?**

New Jersey has received allocations of both Pfizer and Moderna bivalent boosters, which are being delivered to vaccine providers. Over 800 sites are expected to have bivalent booster doses in the coming days. Individuals can find locations offering the boosters on the COVID-19 Vaccine Finder and Community Calendar at [covid19.nj.gov](https://covid19.nj.gov).

**How do the new bivalent boosters compare to the current monovalent booster doses?**

This updated version of COVID-19 boosters offers stronger protections against severe illness and death from Omicron sub-variants. The bivalent booster recommendation replaces previous booster recommendations for people ages 12 years and older. This means that if you are 12 and older, you should receive one dose of an age-appropriate new bivalent booster dose at least 2 months after completing your primary series or after your last monovalent booster dose.
Should patients receive the new bivalent even if they already received booster doses?
Yes, the CDC recommends that everyone age 12 and up should get an updated COVID-19 booster this fall to stay up-to-date on vaccinations. The same is true for people who completed their primary series or received one or two boosters: they should get an updated booster dose at least two months after their last shot.

Eligible individuals can get either the Pfizer or Moderna updated booster, regardless of whether their primary series or most recent dose was with Pfizer, Moderna, Novavax, or the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

What about those people who are under 12 years old?
At this time, no changes to schedules for children ages 6 months through 11 years. Those ages 5-11 are only eligible to receive the monovalent booster dose at this time.

Has the spacing between the two-dose primary series of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna changed?
CDC is providing healthcare providers with additional information to factor into COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for their patients. Some people ages 12 through 64 years—and especially males ages 12 through 39 years—may benefit from getting their second mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose 8 weeks after receiving their first dose, instead of after the FDA-approved or FDA-authorized 3 weeks (Pfizer-BioNTech) or 4 weeks (Moderna).

Recent safety and effectiveness data illustrate that a longer time interval between the first and second mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose gives the body a chance to build a stronger immune response, increasing the effectiveness of these vaccines, and offering individuals greater protection against COVID-19. A longer interval between primary doses can also help lower the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following vaccination. Although rare, some cases have been reported—mostly among adolescent and young adult males—after receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

For whom might the FDA-approved or FDA-authorized 3- or 4-week intervals between 1st and 2nd doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines continue to be optimal?
Vaccine providers should continue to recommend the 3- or 4-week interval for patients who are at higher risk of having an inadequate response to the first mRNA vaccine dose (such as people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised), patients who are at higher risk for severe complications of COVID-19 (such as adults ages 65 years and older), and patients who need rapid protection, such as during high levels of community transmission. Providers can help patients determine the best interval between vaccine doses by examining their balance of benefits and risks. For more information, visit https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#primary-series.

For a quick reference, please see the CDC COVID-19 vaccine chart available here and on the COVID-19 vaccine website, https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml.
Immunocompromised (Weakened Immune Systems)

How do the new bivalent boosters affect the booster schedule for those with weakened immune systems?
The bivalent booster recommendation replaces previous booster recommendations for people ages 12 years and older. This means that if you are 12 and older, you should receive one dose of an age-appropriate new bivalent booster dose at least 2 months after completing your primary series or after your last monovalent booster dose.

Vaccine Approval/Safety Concerns

What are the side effects of COVID-19 vaccine?
Some people may have no side effects. If side effects do occur, they are typically mild and go away in one to two days — like soreness in the arm, fatigue, headaches, or a slight fever. Severe allergic reactions after getting a COVID-19 vaccine are rare. If you are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG), you should not get Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. If you are allergic to polysorbate, you should not get Novavax or J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor about your options.

What about heart problems?
The risk of having a serious reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine is very low. Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported. New studies have shown the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis associated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination—mostly among males between the ages of 12 and 39 years—may be further reduced with a longer time between the first and second dose.


Is there a preference for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines rather than the J&J?
Yes, the CDC is now recommending that people get a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine over the J&J vaccine. This recommendation was based on the latest scientific evidence on vaccine effectiveness, vaccine safety, and considerations of the U.S. supply. Specifically, new data showed a very small, but increased risk for a rare blood clot disorder for those who received the J&J vaccine.

The FDA and CDC take vaccine safety very seriously, which is why all vaccines are closely monitored. Identification of any possible risks, like the low risks associated with the J&J vaccine, is a sign that the nation’s safety monitoring system for COVID-19 vaccines is working.
Can people still get the J&J vaccine?
People who are not yet vaccinated, along with those who received the J&J vaccine and are now eligible for a booster shot, should get a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. These two vaccines are widely available, but J&J vaccines are still on the market for people who are unwilling or unable to get a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.

What is the difference between emergency use authorization and full approval?
In an emergency when lives are at risk, like a pandemic, it may not be possible to have all the evidence that the FDA would usually have before approving a vaccine or drug. If there’s evidence that strongly suggests that patients have benefited from a treatment, the agency can issue an EUA to make it available. For the COVID-19 vaccines, FDA required two months of safety and efficacy data before the EUA was granted. That included clinical trials with tens of thousands of people and rigorous testing and review, and all the vaccines continue to be closely monitored. Compared to emergency use authorization, FDA approval of vaccines requires even more data on safety, manufacturing, and effectiveness over longer periods of time and includes real-world data.

Is there a package insert or Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) along with an EUA?
When FDA authorizes emergency use of a medical product such as an anticipated COVID-19 vaccine, an EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers (in place of a package insert typical of a licensed vaccine) and an EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients (akin to product information for patients or a CDC-provided VIS for a licensed vaccine) must be provided to the healthcare providers prescribing and/or administering the authorized medical product. The healthcare providers, in turn, provide the EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients to vaccine recipients or their guardians. These fact sheets are available at https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines.

What is the difference between the EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and the Vaccine Information Statement (VIS)?
When FDA authorizes a vaccine for use under an EUA, providers and public health entities involved in vaccine administration are legally required to provide the FDA-authorized EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients to individuals receiving vaccine or their guardians, similar to VIS’s that are also required by law for certain licensed vaccines. The EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients, like the VIS, explains the benefits and risks associated with the vaccine. But unlike a VIS, the EUA fact sheet also provides vaccine product-specific information, including the vaccine’s authorized use, dose/dose-series, and known information or experience with the vaccine from clinical trials that support issuance of the EUA by FDA.

Providers can provide the EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients (or VIS if/when the COVID-19 vaccine is licensed) in a variety of ways, including hard copy, online, video, or other electronic means of dissemination.

What are Emergency Use Instructions (EUI)?
EUI allows certain uses of FDA-approved medical products that are needed during public health
emergencies without the FDA needing to issue an EUA. CDC issued EUI for use of the COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna for primary, additional, and/or booster doses in certain individuals. The EUI are necessary because these uses extend beyond their FDA-approved labeling.

It is strongly suggested that providers provide EUI prior to vaccine administration.

For additional information and to download the most current EUI: https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-dispensing-orders-and-emergency-use-instructions-eui#EmergencyUseInstructions

**What safety monitoring is in place for these vaccines?**
For COVID-19 vaccines, CDC and federal partners will use a toolbox of existing and new monitoring systems for COVID-19 vaccine safety.

- CDC will rely on existing systems that monitor the safety of vaccines every day, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD), and the Clinical Immunization Safety Assessment (CISA) Project.
- CDC has also developed a new, voluntary smartphone-based tool, v-safe, that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after patients receive a COVID-19 vaccination.
- CDC has also expanded its collaboration with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to include a special ACIP COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Technical Sub-Group to review available vaccine safety data.

For more information, please visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html.

**What is the difference between VAERS and V-safe?**
VAERS is the reporting mechanism for any adverse events. Specifically related to COVID-19 vaccination, providers will be required to report:

- Vaccine administration errors (whether associated with an adverse event or not)
- Serious adverse events
- Multisystem inflammatory syndrome
- Cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death after the recipient has received COVID-19 vaccine

Anyone can submit a report to VAERS, including patients, family members, healthcare providers, vaccine manufacturers and the general public. VAERS cannot determine if a vaccine caused an adverse event, but can determine if further investigation is needed. Additional information is available at the VAERS website, https://vaers.hhs.gov/index.html.
V-safe is an optional smartphone-based tool that anyone who has received a vaccination can register for. At the time of vaccination, everyone receiving a vaccine will be given information about signing up for v-safe. Anyone reporting a clinically important event during any v-safe health check will receive a phone call from the VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System) hotline, and if applicable, a VAERS report will be taken during that call. V-safe also will collect information on pregnancy status and enables follow-up on pregnant women. For more information, please visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/faq.html.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect the menstrual cycle (period)?
Results from recent research studies show that people who menstruate may observe small, temporary changes in menstruation after COVID-19 vaccination, including:
- Longer duration of menstrual periods
- Shorter intervals between periods
- Heavier bleeding than usual
Despite these temporary changes in menstruation, there is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

Should people who are pregnant or breastfeeding receive the COVID-19 vaccine?
Yes! COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can protect against severe illness from COVID-19. For more information, visit https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html#pregnancy-fertility.


What are the contraindications for (reasons for not receiving) COVID-19 vaccination?
A severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to a previous dose or component of the vaccine is a contraindication for receiving any of the COVID-19 vaccines.

People with an immediate allergic reaction to the first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should not receive additional doses of either of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. CDC has provided a chart to assist in the evaluation of immediate reactions to vaccination: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html#Appendix-D.

COVID-19 Vaccine Enrollment

How can I become a COVID-19 provider?
The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) began accepting new COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement applications through NJIIS on Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Please visit
https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#newFacilityEnrollment for specific information on joining the COVID-19 vaccination program.

I heard vaccines have to be entered into NJIIS? What is NJIIS?
The New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS), operating since 1997, is the statewide immunization information system (IIS) serving as the official repository of immunizations administered to individuals in the state of New Jersey. NJIIS is a free, confidential, population-based online system that collects and consolidates immunization information to provide an accurate immunization assessment for individuals in the state of New Jersey, as well as assists communities in assessing their immunization coverage and identifying pockets of need. For more information on NJIIS, please visit https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#/home.

Why do I need to register with NJIIS?
In order to receive and administer COVID-19 vaccines, you will be required to register with NJIIS by completing the NJIIS COVID-19 Facility Enrollment form available at https://njiis.nj.gov/covid/web/index.html#/newFacilityEnrollment. This form is for facilities and providers that are new to NJIIS and would like to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

What if I am already an NJIIS provider?
Current NJIIS facilities that wish to receive and administer COVID-19 vaccine DO NOT need to complete the COVID-19 Facility Enrollment form, but will need to complete the COVID-19 vaccine enrollment application which includes the CDC COVID-19 Provider Agreement that is available electronically through NJIIS. When you log into NJIIS, the COVID-19 Vaccine Enrollment will be on the landing page. For instructions on completing the provider agreement, please visit https://njiis.nj.gov/docs/covid/COVID-19%20Provider%20Agreement%20Completion%20Guide.pdf.

Will a COVID-19 provider agreement be required?
Yes, the CDC’s provider agreement form will need to be completed in order for a provider to order the COVID-19 vaccine. For instructions on completing the provider agreement, please visit https://njiis.nj.gov/docs/covid/COVID-19%20Provider%20Agreement%20Completion%20Guide.pdf. In addition, all providers interested in administering COVID-19 vaccine will be required to take the COVID-19 On-Demand Training/Tutorial. This tutorial will give an overview of how to
utilize NJIIS, review inventory, add patients, run reports, order COVID-19 vaccine and a summary of requirements for providers administering COVID-19 vaccine. You may register for the training at https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/622062316957434895.

Please note that COVID-19 vaccine ordering through NJIIS is not currently available. The Vaccine Preventable Disease Program will message out instructions once COVID-19 vaccine ordering through NJIIS becomes available.

Is there a vaccine management plan for COVID-19 vaccine providers?
All providers should have a COVID-19 Vaccine Management Plan (Click here) on file. Your Vaccine Management Plan should be updated as needed and reviewed at least once a year.

Does the program require that I administer vaccines to persons who are not my patients?
If you are a private provider, you are not required to provide vaccination to anyone who is not currently a patient. However, CDC strongly encourages, when possible, that providers make vaccine available to others in their local communities, including patients’ family members. Pharmacies, public health clinics and any clinics held in communities are required to offer vaccination to anyone who is eligible. https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccine-providers-faq.html

Where can I go for additional assistance?
The New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center (855-568-0545) is available for COVID-19 healthcare providers. Hours of operation: (10a-6p, M-F; 10a-4p, Sa). Live agents are also available to provide technical assistance on vaccine storage and handling, use of the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS)—the statewide registry, and COVID-19 vaccine information.

New Jersey healthcare providers who are enrolled with the NJ COVID-19 vaccination program but are not receiving or administering the COVID-19 vaccines, can call the CDC Clinician On-Call center at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) if they have clinical questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccines. CDC clinicians are standing by to answer COVID-19 questions from healthcare personnel on a wide range of topics, such as diagnostic challenges, clinical management, and infection prevention and control.

I am a registered nurse and would like to volunteer to vaccinate others. Can you provide information on where one can volunteer?
At the current time, the NJDOH is accepting COVID-19 Enrollment Information Applications from NJIIS providers or facilities to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Applicants will be required to complete a 1-hour tutorial prior to application. Additionally, any resident can sign-up to volunteer to help with New Jersey’s COVID-19 response effort in their communities at https://helpnjnow.communityos.org/.

Who will pay for COVID-19 vaccine? Can it be ordered privately?
COVID-19 vaccine will be distributed by the federal government at no cost to enrolled
COVID-19 vaccination providers. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot be ordered privately at this time.

**Will providers be able to charge patients for COVID-19 vaccines?**
Patients can get the COVID-19 vaccine, including additional doses and booster doses, without a physician’s order or supervision, and they pay nothing for the vaccine and its administration. If you participate in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program, you must:

- Administer the vaccine with no out-of-pocket cost to your patients for the vaccine or administration of the vaccine
- Vaccinate everyone, including the uninsured, regardless of coverage or network status

You also can’t:

- Balance bill for COVID-19 vaccinations
- Charge your patients for an office visit or other fee if COVID-19 vaccination is the only medical service given
- Require additional medical or other services during the visit as a condition for getting a COVID-19 vaccination

For more information, visit the [Medicare Billing for COVID-19 Vaccine Shot Administration](#) and [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Requirements and Support](#) pages.

**Can providers bill insurance plans or other programs for an office visit when administering COVID-19 vaccine?**
Yes, providers can bill insurance plans or other programs for an office visit when administering COVID-19 vaccine if the visit meets the criteria for office visit coding under a recipient’s plan.

**Has there been a change with the NJIIS opt-in process?**
Yes, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order (EO 207) to change NJIIS from an opt-in to an opt-out system. If someone chooses to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, their doses will be automatically entered into NJIIS. For more information, please visit [https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/njiis_executive.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/njiis_executive.pdf).

Providers are required to enter all administered COVID-19 doses into NJIIS.

**Do I have to manually enter data?**
NJIIS has four ways to send data to NJIIS: Manual data entry, HL7 interface, Upload Excel file, and NJVSS.

Data may be entered manually. Once a staff member has completed the COVID-19 training, they will be able to log into NJIIS, with their username and password, to manually enter COVID-19 doses into NJIIS. If you have an Electronic Health Record (EHR) and wish to establish an interface with NJIIS, please complete the Interface Enrollment Request Form. NJIIS can receive immunization data directly from a provider’s office EHR system via HL7 version 2.5.1 standard.
messaging protocol. The time it takes to establish an interface will vary based on issues with data submissions, errors in formatting of the messages.

The Excel reporting format is available as an intermediate step while setting up an interface. Excel upload is only for COVID-19 doses. If you would like a excel upload please complete the interface enrollment form. This form can be found on the NJIIS page under the interface enrollment section.

Vaccine Storage and Handling

Are there different storage and handling requirements for COVID-19 vaccine?
Yes, there are different storage requirements for each of the COVID-19 vaccines. A CDC COVID-19 Addendum to the Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit is available at https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/index.html. There are also storage and handling summaries at the CDC’s info-by-product website:

https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/storage.html
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/moderna/storage.html
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/janssen/index.html

In addition, CDC developed educational and training materials for health care providers related to COVID-19 vaccine storage, handling and administration based on ACIP recommendations, the ACIP General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization, product information from vaccine manufacturers, and results of scientific studies. For a list of resources, visit https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/COVID-19-Clinical-Training-and-Resources-for-HCPs.pdf.

Should jurisdictions invest in ultra-cold storage units at this time?
Jurisdictions are not required to purchase ultra-cold storage units. Many COVID-19 vaccines do have allowances for regular freezer or refrigerator storage. Ultra-cold storage is the preferred storage for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine since it supports the longest shelf life; however, the Pfizer grey, orange, and maroon caps can be stored in ultra-cold freezers or refrigerators. (Pfizer thermal shippers should no longer be used for vaccine storage.)

Will there be additional funding for jurisdictions to purchase ultra-cold storage units? Because CDC does not recommend jurisdictions invest in ultra-cold storage units at this time, there will be no additional funding available.

How is the Department making sure that sites are keeping the vaccines in the proper conditions and not wasting doses?
All COVID-19 vaccine providers must sign and comply with the CDC’s provider agreement which requires healthcare providers to submit vaccine administration data within 24 hours to the statewide New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS). Daily temperature logs are required on-site to ensure vaccine efficacy and are submitted to NJIIS on the 1st and
15th of each month. The NJDOH is also required by CDC to conduct site visits to certain COVID-19 enrolled providers. These site visits are currently being conducted.

**How do I transfer vaccines?**
For vaccine transfers, temperature excursions, or other questions related to vaccine inventory that have not been answered, please email COVID19.Provider@doh.nj.gov. Please note you must receive approval from the COVID-19 program prior to initiating vaccine transfer.

**Can providers donate COVID-19 vaccines internationally?**
As a COVID-19 provider participating in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program, you cannot transfer or donate COVID-19 vaccines allocated to you directly or from your jurisdiction outside of the United States. Any international transfer or donation of COVID-19 vaccines must be undertaken by the federal government. There are a complex array of legal issues involved, as well as questions about proper storage and handling of these vaccines that may raise potential safety concerns. As a reminder, all of the doses that have been provided to you or your jurisdiction have been allocated under the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program, which has stringent requirements for how such doses may be used. Such requirements apply to any COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., refrigerated Janssen vaccine, and frozen Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine) regardless of storage location.

The U.S. Government recommends optimizing the use of all vaccines across vaccination sites, and we are committed to making sure that available and unused COVID-19 vaccine is utilized appropriately, whether in your own state, tribal community, or elsewhere. U.S.-based providers and partners with questions regarding donating vaccine internationally or sharing within their jurisdictions or domestically should contact CDC’s Distribution and Federal Programs functional box (eocvent551@cdc.gov). Inquiries from international partners may be referred to the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Global Affairs (OGAPETFlu@hhs.gov).

**Vaccine Administration**

**Is a consent form required for vaccination of minors?**
The EUA fact sheet for caregivers must be provided to the parents/guardians in advance. Informed consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian in order for the minor to be vaccinated. Informed consent can be obtained (a) by a parent/guardian signing an informed consent form or (b) if the parent/guardian is physically present and verbally consents to the child receiving the vaccine.

Points of Dispensing (PODs) should follow existing laws regarding consent for minors for medical procedures and each POD should consult with their own legal counsel regarding the facility's specific policies and procedures for consent.
Does CDC recommend an observation period after vaccination?  
ACIP currently recommends that providers should consider observing vaccine recipients for 15 minutes after receipt of a vaccine. Persons with a history of anaphylaxis (due to any cause) should be observed for 30 minutes.

What are the recommendations for those people who received COVID-19 vaccine outside of the United States?  
The recommendations for people vaccinated outside of the United States depend on the vaccine(s) received for the primary series, whether the primary series was completed, and whether a booster dose was received.

For detailed guidance, please visit Interim Clinical Considerations Appendix E.

I am not receiving the appropriate number of doses per vial of COVID-19 vaccine. What can I do?  
Depending on the type of syringe you use (low dead volume (LDV) syringes or non-LDV) to draw up COVID-19 vaccine, you may not be able to obtain all the anticipated doses from a vial. NJDOH does not have control over what brand of syringes are sent within the ancillary kits. If you are receiving less than this due to the syringes in the ancillary kits, please enter the missing doses under a waste transaction in NJIIS as “Other- Doses Not Obtained.” In the comments put the brand and model of syringe sent to you.

If I have leftover COVID-19 vaccine at the end of the day, can I use this vaccine for walk-in patients?  
Yes, please use any COVID-19 vaccine available to prevent any missed opportunities for vaccination and/or vaccine wastage. Be sure to follow all vaccine storage and handling requirements and to document doses administered into NJIIS. Follow guidelines for infection control and patient safety to administer vaccine properly:

- Never combine or “pool” partial doses from two or more vials to obtain a full dose of vaccine.
- Withdraw only the number of doses authorized for the specific vaccine.
- Discard vaccine vial and remaining vaccine if the amount of vaccine left in the vial is not a full dose.

Has CDC provided clinical guidance on what to do if an error occurs while administering COVID-19 vaccinations?  
Yes. CDC published an appendix to its “Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States.” This appendix provides resources for preventing and reporting COVID-19 vaccine administration errors, as well as a simple table outlining actions to take after an error has occurred: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html#appendix-c.
Quarantine and Isolation

What are the current recommendations for quarantine and isolation of the general public?

For information specific to New Jersey, visit https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml.

What are the current quarantine and isolation guidelines for healthcare personnel?
Guidance for residents and staff of healthcare settings can be found in the Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19.


Protection from Vaccine/Efficacy

Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?
COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of COVID-19 and its potentially severe complications. All COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use in the United States helped protect people against COVID-19, including severe illness, in clinical trial settings.

In addition to providing protection against COVID-19, there is increasing evidence that COVID-19 vaccines also provide protection against COVID-19 infections without symptoms (asymptomatic infections). COVID-19 vaccination can reduce the spread of disease overall, helping protect people around you.

For more information, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/index.html

If my patient had COVID-19 and recovered do they need to get the vaccine?
Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19.

Anyone currently infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation.

In addition, people who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination until their quarantine period has ended to avoid potentially exposing healthcare personnel and others during the vaccination visit.
For detailed guidance, visit https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html#recommendations.

Can people who had multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults or children (MIS-A or MIS-C) get the COVID-19 vaccine?
People who have a history of MIS-A or MIS-C may need to wait a while after recovering before they can get vaccinated. Please review https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html for the latest guidance.

Masking and Vaccine Requirements

**When should people wear a face mask?**
In New Jersey, face masks are no longer required in most outdoor and indoor settings.

The Department of Health recommends wearing a face mask whenever you have symptoms of COVID-19, tested positive, were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19, or live in a county with elevated or "high" COVID community levels.

In addition, businesses may continue to require face coverings for employees, customers, and guests. Businesses are not permitted to restrict the use of face masks by their staff, customers, or visitors.


**When will the school mask mandate be lifted?**
Governor Phil Murphy announced that masks and facial coverings will no longer be mandated for students, staff, or visitors in schools and childcare centers effective March 7, 2022. The Governor’s decision was based on the continued drop in new cases and hospitalizations and the continued growth of vaccinations for our school-aged population.


**What are the differences between masks?**
While all masks and respirators provide some level of protection, loosely woven cloth products provide the least protection, layered finely woven products offer more protection, well-fitting disposable surgical masks and KN95s offer even more protection, and well-fitting NIOSH-approved respirators (including N95s) offer the highest level of protection.

Whatever product you choose, it is most important to wear a mask or respirator correctly (fit closely on the face without any gaps along the edges or around the nose) and be comfortable enough (covering your nose and mouth) so that you can keep it on when you need to.

**What employees are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or weekly testing?**
Following recent updates to COVID-19 guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in advance of the upcoming school year, Governor Phil Murphy signed an executive order lifting the requirement that school districts, child care settings, and state contractors maintain a policy requiring their unvaccinated workers undergo routine testing. The change will apply to school districts and child care settings immediately, and to state contractors as of September 1, 2022. For more information, visit COVID-19 Information Hub.

Can an employer access an employee’s COVID-19 vaccination records in the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS) to verify their vaccination status?
No, an employer cannot access an employee’s vaccination records that are maintained in the NJIIS for the purpose of verifying the employee’s vaccinations for employment. An authorized NJIIS user’s access to information in the NJIIS is limited by law, namely N.J.S.A. 26:4-131 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 8:57, subchapter 3. The statutes and rules provide that NJIIS users shall only access an individual’s vaccination information in the NJIIS if they have claimed the individual in NJIIS as their patient and/or if the user is currently providing healthcare services to the individual. The statutes and rules further provide that a child care center, school, college or university shall only access an individual’s immunization information in the NJIIS if they have enrolled or are in the process of enrolling the individual in their institution.

Because the statutes and rules do not permit an employer to verify an employee’s vaccination status in NJIIS, employers should have employees submit vaccination documentation for verification. Please see COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation FAQs for more details on valid vaccine documentation.

All authorized users should review the statute and regulations to ensure use is consistent with existing laws. The NJIIS is the official Immunization Registry pursuant to the Statewide Immunization Registry Act – N.J.S.A. 26:4-131 et seq. (P.L. 2004, c. 138), N.J.A.C. 8:57, subchapter 3.

**Other Vaccines**

Can you receive COVID-19 at the same time as other vaccines?
COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered on the same day. Currently it is unknown if there is a potential for increased reactions when COVID-19 is given with other vaccines. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, administer each injection in a different injection site. For adolescents and adults, the deltoid muscle can be used for more than one intramuscular injection. For more information, visit
**Will getting the flu vaccine protect me against coronavirus?**
No. Influenza viruses and coronaviruses are different. Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19; however, the vaccine can reduce flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and can help to conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources during the pandemic.
It’s likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter, making it more important than ever to get a flu vaccine! It is the best way to protect yourself and others – especially those who are particularly vulnerable to both COVID-19 and influenza such as older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

**Medical Therapies & Testing**

**Are COVID-19 treatments available?**
For people at high risk of disease progression, the FDA has issued EUAs for a number of treatments for COVID-19.

- Monoclonal antibody treatments could help the immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus.
- Oral antiviral medications that target specific parts of the SARS-CoV-2 virus can help reduce its multiplication and spread through the patient’s body.


**What are antibodies?**
Antibodies are proteins that people's bodies make to fight viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19. You can receive antibodies against COVID-19 to help protect you – these are called passive antibody therapies and include convalescent plasma and anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies. The monoclonal antibodies specifically target the virus that causes COVID-19.

For questions about whether you can and should get antibody treatment, call your doctor or health care provider

More information about medication therapies can be accessed at [https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml).

**Can my patient get vaccinated if they received passive antibody products?**
It is no longer necessary to delay COVID-19 vaccination following receipt of monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.
However, in people who previously received a COVID-19 vaccine, administration of tixagevimab/cilgavimab (EVUSHELD™) for pre-exposure prophylaxis should be deferred for at least two weeks after vaccination, per the product EUA.

For more information, Interim Clinical Considerations.

Where can people get free COVID-19 testing and treatment?
Free COVID-19 testing and treatment is available at Community Health Centers, also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), to all people whether you have health insurance or not and regardless of your immigration status. Find an FQHC near you with this search tool or on 211’s online list of community clinics.

Individuals with urgent symptoms may also continue to access services at acute care hospitals. The COVID-19 testing cost will be waived for uninsured individuals eligible for charity care. Information on the Charity Care Program can be found at: https://www.nj.gov/health/charitycare.

For additional testing locations and information on COVID-19 testing in New Jersey, visit covid19.nj.gov/testing.

Additional Information

- [covid19.nj.gov/](covid19.nj.gov/)
- [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](covid19.nj.gov/vaccine)
- [covid19.nj.gov/finder](covid19.nj.gov/finder) (search for vaccine appointments)
- COVID-19 Hotline 1-800-962-1253 (*for information only. NOT for scheduling vaccine appointments*)
- Call 855-568-0545 for provider information. Live agents are available. Hours of operation: (10a-6p, M-F; 10a-4p, Sa).
- Call 856-429-1168 to get appointment assistance for seniors 65 and older.
- CDC clinician on-call center 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)