

COVID-19 VACCINE

FAQs for COVID-19 Vaccination

Content provided by Mayo Clinic

Who should be vaccinated against COVID-19 infection?

Vaccination will be recommended for everyone, but supplies will be limited at first. Federal and state authorities call for health care personnel to be offered vaccine in the first phase of the program, starting with hospital workers, emergency responders and long-term care staff.

The initial priority will be to vaccinate health care personnel who are at high occupational risk for exposure to COVID-19 and those working in roles that are essential to the COVID-19 response. We expect that the program will expand to all health care personnel soon, as well as patients at high risk of COVID-19 infection and complications.

NCH Healthcare System will follow the guidance provided by federal and state authorities to prioritize groups for vaccinations. The guidelines have been developed by numerous national bodies, including the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine.

To develop a strategy for equitable allocation of limited vaccine supplies, these guidelines consider the risks of:

- Acquiring infection.
- Severe morbidity and mortality.
- Negative societal effects.
- Transmitting infection to others.

As availability improves, vaccines will be offered to all others in accordance to federal and state guidelines.

When will NCH start vaccinating people for COVID-19?

On Dec. 17, 2020, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine will be reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Pending approval, the State of

Florida is preparing to receive 367,000 doses of the vaccine the following week. NCH Healthcare System has been selected as one of 173 hospital locations to receive a shipment of the vaccine. Our supply allocation is unknown at this time. Limited supplies mean that distribution programs must initially focus on specific **high-risk groups**. High risk is defined for vaccines as front line clinical staff with greatest risk of COVID-19 exposure. Recommendations for target groups may change as vaccines become readily available. NCH anticipates having enough vaccine for everyone who wants it later in 2021.

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccination?

The Moderna vaccine has been studied in over 30,000 people. Experimental vaccine data indicate 94.5% efficacy after two doses. Efficacy is the measure of effectiveness obtained from a randomized controlled clinical trial. Further details regarding the effectiveness of the vaccine, such as how long the vaccination offers protection, are not yet available.

How many doses does COVID-19 vaccination require?

The Moderna vaccine requires two doses are given 28 days apart. Individuals who start with one vaccine should be given the second dose of the same vaccine.

Will I have a choice of which vaccine I will get?

Given initial limited supplies, NCH will distribute the allocated vaccines received from the state. A choice of vaccines may not be possible.

How long will a COVID-19 vaccination offer protection?

It is not yet known how long COVID-19 vaccination will offer protection. Periodic boosters, such as with the annual flu shot, may or may not be needed.

Aren't masking, social distancing and self-quarantining reasonable alternatives to COVID-19 vaccination?

Given the extent of COVID-19 spread in the U.S., masking, social distancing and self-quarantining has not been enough to contain the pandemic nor have these public health measures been fully followed. Developing large-scale immunity in the community through vaccination is key to stopping the pandemic.

Everyone will need to continue to take precautions, such as masking and physical distancing, until the spread has stopped. Until then, COVID-19 spread can continue in the community from people who have or don't have symptoms.

A person can be contagious for as many as 14 days without symptoms. A person can develop symptoms but be contagious before symptoms start. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others, beginning two days before symptoms develop and up to 10 days after becoming sick.

Will my primary provider offer vaccination for COVID-19?

Your primary care provider will not offer vaccination for COVID-19 at this time. The COVID-19 vaccine will be available in a phased approach. The vaccination may be available to NCH primary care patients at some point in the future.

Can those who have had COVID-19 get vaccinated for COVID-19?

Yes. NCH recommends getting vaccinated for COVID-19, even in those who have had COVID-19 previously. However, those that had COVID-19 should delay vaccination until about 90 days from diagnosis, when antibody protection wanes. People should not get vaccinated if in quarantine after exposure or if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I got the flu vaccine?

Yes. NCH recommends all patients get the flu vaccine as well as the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

Will persons who get the vaccine still have to wear a face mask?

Yes. While the vaccine is highly effective at preventing symptomatic and severe disease, it is not 100% effective, and it is not yet known how well it prevents asymptomatic infection, or how long its effects will last. Since it is possible that a person vaccinated could get COVID-19 they could still spread the virus to another person. Everyone will need to continue taking precautions like masking and physical distancing until the spread has stopped.

I've heard that the COVID-19 vaccine is a live virus and many older people ... the most vulnerable ... are hesitant to get the vaccine because it could make them sick. Is that true?

There are many COVID-19 vaccines in development. The first vaccines NCH will receive are not live virus vaccines. Some of the COVID-19 vaccines under development are live but others are not.

Can a previously healthy older person get sick with COVID-19 after taking the vaccine? Do the benefits outweigh the risks in this population?

The vaccines are not 100% effective, but they are far better than not getting vaccine. The benefits certainly outweigh the risks in healthy older persons. One cannot get COVID-19 infection from the initial COVID-19 vaccines NCH will receive as they are inactivated vaccines and not live vaccines.

Can local and out of state non-healthcare residents come to NCH to get vaccinated for COVID-19?

At this time, local and out of state residents who are not healthcare workers cannot come to NCH to get vaccinated for COVID-19. Given initial limited supplies, NCH is allocated vaccine for health care personnel who are at high occupational risk for exposure to COVID-19. NCH will distribute vaccines to the highest-risk groups based on guidance from public health authorities. As supplies increase in 2021, the program will expand to include broader populations.

Can people with an egg allergy receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Neither the Pfizer/BioNTech nor the Moderna Inc. vaccine contain egg.

The side effects for the COVID-19 vaccine are identical to the virus itself. If people are vaccinated and develop side effects or symptoms, would they have to be tested for COVID-19?

Vaccine recipients will be provided with guidance on how to interpret side effects and symptoms, and what actions they should take following vaccination.