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## Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

### PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

**To:** Health Care, City/County Health  
**From:** Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist  
**Subject:** Adverse Event Related to Vaccination with Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine  
**Date / Time:** Thursday, December 24, 2020 at 11:47AM  
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## ADVERSE EVENT RELATED TO VACCINATION WITH PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE

Nationwide distribution of the first COVID-19 vaccine started December 14, 2020. U.S. CDC has since received reports that some people have experienced severe allergic reactions—also known as anaphylaxis—after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. An allergic reaction is considered severe when a person needs to be treated with epinephrine or an EpiPen<sup>®</sup> or if they must go to a hospital for emergent care.

On Tuesday, December 22, 2020, Maine Medical Center reported an instance of a severe allergic reaction in an individual who had just received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The individual's past medical history was significant for severe allergic reactions and eosinophilic asthma. The individual experienced nausea, diaphoresis, and a dry cough that progressed to shortness of breath. The individual received epinephrine, was transported to the Maine Medical Center ED for monitoring, and is doing well.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VACCINE PROVIDERS

Severe allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccine can occur in any recipient, but those with a history of allergic reactions should be closely monitored. CDC has [provided recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination providers](#) about how to prepare for the possibility of a severe allergic reaction:

- All people who get a COVID-19 vaccine should be monitored on-site.
- People with a history of severe allergic reactions should be monitored for 30 minutes after getting the vaccine.
- All other people should be monitored for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine.
- Vaccination providers should have appropriate medications and equipment—such as epinephrine, antihistamines, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs—at all COVID-19 vaccination sites.
- If a vaccine recipient experiences a severe allergic reaction after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, vaccination providers should provide rapid care and call for emergency medical services. The individual should be monitored in a medical facility for at least several hours.

If someone has a severe allergic reaction after getting vaccinated, the provider must send a report to the [Vaccine Adverse Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). VAERS is the national system that collects reports from healthcare professionals, vaccine manufacturers, and the public about adverse events that happen after vaccination.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Information for vaccine providers in Maine <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/index.shtml>
- U.S. CDC's COVID-19 vaccine website <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>
- U.S. CDC's COVID-19 vaccines and severe allergic reactions website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>
- U.S. CDC's COVID-19 website on Preparing for the potential management of anaphylaxis at COVID-19 vaccination sites <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/anaphylaxis-management.html>