

Vaccination of Youth Ages 16 and 17

April 5, 2021

Beginning April 7, 2021, Maine residents ages 16 and 17 are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, as part of Maine's [acceleration](#) of eligibility for all residents. Currently, only the Pfizer vaccine is authorized for individuals ages 16 and 17.

Neither of the other vaccines (i.e., Moderna or Johnson & Johnson / Janssen) is authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for COVID-19 vaccination for 16 and 17-year-olds at this time. Similarly, no COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for those 15 and younger at this time.

Vaccination providers for people ages 16 to 17: The State of Maine's [listing of vaccination sites](#) will, starting on April 7, 2021, indicate which sites are accepting appointments for youth. Only vaccination providers that receive Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine can schedule appointments for and administer the vaccine for youth ages 16 and 17. While the Maine Immunization Program tracks which vaccination providers receive Pfizer vaccine, providers have the most up-to-date information on how many of those doses are available at any site at a given time and their operational capacity to vaccinate youth ages 16 and 17. The State is working on a distribution plan to ensure that residents ages 16 and 17 statewide have access to a COVID-19 vaccine.

Providers should notify Lindsay.Hammes@Maine.gov by 3 pm on April 6 initially and when your site changes status on an ongoing basis if you or one or more of your vaccination sites is able to vaccinate individuals ages 16 and 17. This information will be publicly posted on the State vaccine website, and will also be available through the Community Vaccination Line (1-888-445-4111).

Consent: Parental or guardian consent can be obtained in two ways. The first option for consent is by phone with a witness listening on the phone line as arranged by the vaccination site. Telephone registration staff can write "verbal consent obtained" on the guardian/parent signature line followed by their signature. And a witness can write "witnessed personally" followed by their signature. The second option is to provide consent on paper or electronically. Each vaccination site has a consent form. Such consent forms can be mailed or emailed in advance to vaccination sites or brought to sites at the time of registration.

A small number of youths may give their own consent for COVID-19 vaccination. This includes those who:

- Are living separately from parents/legal guardian and independent of parental support. (A minor may prove he/she meets this exception with certain documentation, including a written statement signed by (1) the director or designee of a government or nonprofit agency that provides services to individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) a school social worker or counselor, or (3) an attorney representing the minor, or proof of filing for emancipation or a copy of a protection from abuse complaint or a temporary order or final order of protection against the minor's parent or legal guardian);
- Are or were legally married;
- Are or were a member of the Armed Forces of the U.S.; or
- Have been emancipated by the court.

If the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the legal guardian, the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) policy authorizes the resource parents (foster parents) to provide consent for routine medical services, such as immunizations, after appropriate safeguards are met. Youth over the age of 14 years must be informed of the risks and benefits of vaccination and those eligible for COVID-19 vaccine must be involved in the decision to receive the vaccine. Any questions regarding the immunization policy and procedure should be directed to the DHHS caseworker for the youth.

Presence of Guardian: The Department recommends that a parent or guardian be present during COVID-19 vaccination, although it is not a requirement except in cases where Maine DHHS is the legal guardian. If Maine DHHS is the legal guardian, resource parents and/or Maine DHHS caseworkers must accompany the youth to receive the vaccine.

Due to space constraints at vaccine clinics, youth ages 16 and 17 may be able to get a vaccine without a guardian present as long as consent is obtained from the guardian ahead of time. In order for youths to be able to get a vaccine without a guardian present, the clinic should ensure that it has the guardian's emergency phone number and consent forms should include emergency treatment options in case of an allergic reaction to vaccine.

Verification of a youth's eligibility: In recognition that youth are less likely to have documentation of age and residency, parents or guardians can attest to the eligibility of a youth in their care. Vaccine sites can also check the State immunization registry, ImmPact, to verify the date of birth of a person under 18 years old.

Transportation: Maine DHHS is offering free transportation to anyone needing a ride to a vaccination appointment, including youth ages 16 and 17. Individuals must first schedule a vaccine appointment. Those with a vaccine appointment can schedule a ride by calling 1-855-608-5172 (Monday through Saturday, 7:00am to 4pm) at least 48 hours before the vaccine appointment. Individuals will need to indicate if a parent or guardian will be accompanying the youth at the time that they request the ride. Parents or guardians are not required to accompany youth ages 16 and 17 on their ride. Transportation is managed by ModivCare. Drivers will leave patients for the vaccine appointment and will return at either 60 or 90 minutes. ModivCare cannot provide transportation to drive-thru vaccination sites.

School-based clinics: Some Maine Immunization Program providers have been approached by school districts and college/universities requesting special clinics for students. Exclusive clinics for students or educational organization staff are not permitted at this time. As Maine expands eligibility on April 7 from residents age 50 and older to all residents age 16 and older, Maine will initially prioritize at-risk and hard-to-reach individuals for special clinics, such as those with disabilities, medical conditions that put them at risk of severe illness or death due to COVID-19, and who otherwise face structural barriers to receiving a vaccine. Age-eligible students who are Maine residents may sign up for vaccination alongside other eligible individuals at all vaccination sites.

A Maine resident is defined as an individual living in the State of Maine with the intent to remain or has entered the State with a job commitment and intends to live in Maine while working in Maine. Proof of residency includes but is not limited to a Maine-issued driver's license or state identification card; a bill or other piece of mail that includes the person's name and Maine address; or, in the case of individuals entering the state for a job, a letter or statement from their employer verifying their employment in Maine. This may include individuals living in Maine for higher education.