
COVID-19 FAQs

Who is being vaccinated now?

Maine is using a phased approach to vaccination, consistent with U.S. CDC guidance, that remains subject to change as we learn more. At this time, vaccine availability is limited to health care workers and emergency responders, and Maine's most vulnerable residents, such as Mainers living in nursing facilities

The next group to be vaccinated are Maine residents aged 70 and older, starting January 18. People aged 65 to 69 and adults with high-risk medical conditions will get vaccinated later when vaccine supply is sufficient.

These phases are subject to change, and the specific timeline for each vaccine phase depends on vaccine availability. Details on each phase and timeline will be released as soon as available. *Updated 1/18/2021*

Can residents from other states get vaccinated for COVID-19 in Maine, if they are otherwise eligible?

Not at this time. Maine is receiving an extremely limited supply of vaccine based on the number of Maine residents.

Who is in each phase and when can they expect to be vaccinated?

Phase 1a – December – January

- Health Care Personnel Needed to Preserve Critical Health Care Services
- Residents and Staff of Long-Term Care Facilities
- Other Patient-Facing Health Care Personnel
- Public Safety Personnel
- COVID-19 Response Personnel

Phase 1b: February through April

- Older Mainers
- Adults of all Ages With High-Risk Medical Conditions
- Certain Front-Line Essential Workers

Phase 1c: May and June

- Other Essential Workers

Phase 2: June and Beyond

- Persons aged 16-64 not otherwise eligible in a prior phase.

I work in public safety or COVID-19 response. How will I know where to get vaccinated?

Your employer will arrange for how you will get vaccinated.

Who is eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1B?

- Older Mainers (70 years and older)
- Adults of all Ages With High-Risk Medical Conditions
- Certain Front-Line Essential Workers

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has classified the following non–health care essential workers as frontline workers:

- first responders (e.g., firefighters and police officers), corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers and support staff members) as well as childcare workers.

How do I know if I am considered an “essential worker” that is eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1B and when can I get vaccinated?

Phase 1b continues to include frontline workers, as recommended by the U.S. CDC’s advisory group; however, identifying these workers and determining how they will be vaccinated will occur as more information on the vaccine supply emerges. Once vaccine supply increases, Maine will more quickly vaccinate people who are greater risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19 because of their occupation or circumstances. *Updated 1/22/2021*

I am 70 or older. How will I know where to get vaccinated?

There are two ways: 1) You may hear from your health care provider, or 2) Make an appointment at [a vaccination site now offering the vaccine to Maine people 70 and older](#). This list will be updated as regularly as more vaccination sites become available.

What health conditions qualify a person for getting a vaccine in Phase 1b?

The U.S. CDC has [studied](#) individuals with severe cases of COVID-19 and found that having health conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and cancer increases the odds that a person with COVID-19 requires hospitalization or help breathing, and increases the risk of death. Maine clinicians are reviewing these conditions and additional guidance will be issued in the future.

How many doses will the state receive of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Details about Maine's [COVID-19 vaccine orders are available here](#).

How will private practices have access to the vaccine?

In coordination with Maine CDC and DHHS, professional associations in Maine, including the Maine Medical Association (MMA) and Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA), have engaged independent member practices to assess the number and location of patient-facing clinicians and staff to vaccinate. In addition, a number of health systems, community hospitals, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), and larger independent physician locations have begun to reach out to community physicians. With this needs assessment, the MMA and MOA can help connect patient-facing personnel with sites able to vaccinate them. This process should provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for ambulatory physicians, nurses, and their patient-facing staff over the coming weeks, recognizing that this will depend on the supply of vaccine Maine receives from the federal government as well as the rate of immunizations at vaccination sites.

I am a dentist, when will I be vaccinated?

The Maine Dental Association will be reaching out to their members with a plan for vaccination.

How will we know who is getting vaccinated each week?

Updates are made to Maine's COVID-19 website: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/updates>

MIP will also be sending updates as the vaccination process evolves and we move through the phases.

What is the distribution process?

The COVID-19 vaccine distribution process leverages existing networks, processes and partnerships to make vaccines available across America as quickly and safely as possible. Each week, as doses are released by companies for distribution, planes and trucks transport the vaccine to states and jurisdictions across the country.

The federal government, through [Operation Warp Speed](#), has been working since the pandemic started to develop, manufacture, and distribute COVID-19 vaccines.

Right now, most of the vaccine is delivered directly to entities that are vaccinating people in phase 1. A small amount of the vaccine has come to Maine CDC, and we have distributed it to vaccination sites that have not been able to receive doses directly.

Vaccine Distribution Process: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ows-vaccine-distribution-process.pdf>

What is Maine's process for distribution?

Maine is generally following the recommendation of the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

If vaccine supply increases, Maine may adapt our plan to include groups beyond those recommended to be vaccinated first. In general, groups most at risk of exposure to COVID-19 or groups most likely to experience extreme adverse symptoms are recommended to receive the vaccine first.

How is it determined what states get what allocation?

The federal government ultimately makes the decision as to how many doses are allocated to each state as they work closely with each jurisdiction.

[See the allocations for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine by jurisdiction](#)

[See the allocations for the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine by jurisdiction](#)

How is the vaccine prioritized?

Maine has prioritized its limited supply of vaccine for health care personnel and residents of skilled nursing and long-term care facilities under Phase 1a. While the federal government controls the states vaccine supply, Maine CDC continues to work with partners throughout the state to vaccinate as many Maine people on the front lines of the pandemic as quickly as possible. The goal remains to provide vaccine by February to all health care personnel and long-term care residents in Phase 1a.

How will people learn when it is their turn for vaccination?

People will learn about access to vaccines through the Maine CDC, employers, and their medical providers.

If I'm in the current priority group and it is my turn to be vaccinated, how do I get access to the vaccine?

Individuals should first check with their employer or medical provider to ensure that a plan hasn't already been made for them to receive the vaccine.

Updates to Maine's vaccination process can also be found on: www.maine.gov/covid/vaccines

Who is eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1A?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) [made recommendations for distribution of COVID-19 vaccines during times of limited supply](#). **Phase 1a** includes health care personnel as well as residents and staff of long-term care facilities.

[ACIP defines health care personnel \(HCP\) as](#) "paid and unpaid personnel serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials....HCP comprise clinical staff members, including nursing or medical assistants and support staff members (e.g. those who work in food, environmental, and administrative services."

Recognizing that Phase 1a health care personnel in Maine comprise a large group, below is a recommended categorization for vaccination sequencing:

Group 1: Health Care Personnel Needed to Preserve Critical Health Care Services: Paid and unpaid personnel, including both clinicians and support staff, who physically work in hospitals, acute care

settings, Emergency Medical Services, or home health on a regular basis and have direct contact with patients, or have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials.

This includes outpatient clinicians and their staff who provide care to patients at risk of hospitalization such as providers in urgent care centers, medical practices providing acute care, dialysis centers, and oncology practices.

Group 2: Other Patient-Facing Health Care Personnel: Paid and unpaid personnel, including both clinicians and support staff, who physically work in other health care settings on a regular basis and have direct contact with patients, or have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials.

Examples include personnel who work with aerosols, such as in dental fields; health care providers with prolonged contact with patients; practitioners in behavioral health, optometry, school nurses, and environmental services workers at health care practices.

Those administering vaccines to health care personnel should ask the following screening questions to determine whether an individual is part of Group 2. **(Answering 'yes' to all three questions can help to identify individuals appropriate for Group 2 vaccination.)**

1. *Are you a patient-facing health care personnel?*
 2. *Do you work in-person in a health care facility (as opposed to remotely)?*
 3. *Do you have direct contact with patients or with infectious material?*
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Group 3: Non-Patient Facing Health Care Personnel: Paid and unpaid personnel, such as health care administrators, who do not have direct contact with patients or the potential for direct or indirect exposure to infectious materials, but work in health care settings on a regular basis alongside personnel who have direct contact with patients or exposure to infectious materials.

Questions to determine inclusion in Group 3 will be developed soon.

Maine's goal is to complete Phase 1a by February to promote public health by protecting Maine's health care workforce against COVID-19. Vaccinating at this velocity means that some individuals within Phase 1a are vaccinated before others even if those individuals face less exposure to COVID-19.

What resources are available if you are a Long-Term Care Facility looking to vaccinate your residents?

There is a Pharmacy Partnership Program available. If you would like to learn more, please reach out to Madeleine Squibb at madeleine.squibb@maine.gov

How do providers sign up to distribute the vaccine and what is that process?

Any facility, organization, or healthcare provider licensed to possess vaccine, administer vaccine, or provide vaccination services in the State of Maine is eligible to enroll.

Only providers enrolled through this online enrollment and approved by the Maine Immunization Program can receive and administer COVID-19 vaccine in Maine.

To enroll, organizations must complete:

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement \(PDF\)](#)

Additional information on the process and what is required can be found here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/enrollment.shtml>

Are there informational calls available for providers and how do they sign up?

All providers are encouraged to join the **MeCDCVaccination Working Group** call

This call occurs **every Thursday from 1-2 pm** and discusses strategies and operations in preparing Maine for COVID-19 vaccination.

Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/95037941905?pwd=emlpR0x5RnQ2YTkvMHE5YIRoNVQzUT09>

Meeting ID: 950 3794 1905

Passcode: vaccine

PowerPoint slides to past meetings are located here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/communications.shtml> 13 Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19 Vaccine Info for Clinicians Webinars

Tuesdays at 7:30 –8:00 AM & Fridays at 12:00 –12:30PM

Dr. Stephen Sears, Dr. Amy Belisle and Dr. Lisa Letourneau host these meetings.

The sessions offer information on the vaccine development and approval process, followed by time for questions and discussion.

Zoom/web:

<https://zoom.us/j/6218434986>

Meeting ID: 621 843 4986

Passcode: 338847

Slides and recordings to these webinars are located here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/vaccine-info.shtml>

What if I am a Provider and I have a patient with specific illnesses/allergies and wanting to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

For more information on COVID-19 Vaccines and Allergic Reactions, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>

Providers may also join the “COVID-19 Vaccine Info for Clinicians Webinars”

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We are a congregate living facility (ie. Boarding, residential homes, and assisted living facilities) who do not have a partnership in which we can sign up for vaccine?

Please contact the Maine Immunization Program – ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov or 207-287-3746, so we can be put you in a partnership.

Who do I contact if I have questions on the storage and handling of vaccines (including temperature excursions), questions on routine vaccinations, and ImmPact related questions?

ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov

207-287-3746

or ImmPact.Support@maine.gov

207-287-3006

How can I find out updates on Maine's vaccination process?

www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines

The Maine COVID webpage will be updated as new public information becomes available.

What health education documents has the Maine Immunization Program developed for the COVID vaccine? Where are they located?

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/documents/administration-routine-vaccinations-covid19-patients.pdf>

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/providers/newsletters-and-memos.shtml>

Where is MIP's COVID-19 webpage located and what is available?

Our COVID-10 webpage is located here: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/index.shtml> 19 Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

This webpage includes information on how to enroll in the program, storage and handling resources, EUA Fact Sheets/Standing Orders, Vaccine Safety, Communications (anything sent out from the Maine Immunization Program regarding COVID-19 and the slides from each weekly Vaccine Planning Work Group Meeting), link to the U.S. CDC's COVID page, COVID-19 Vaccine Info for Clinicians (including slides and information from ME DHHS Clinician Information Sessions with Dr. Stephen Sears, Dr. Amy Belisle, and Dr. Lisa Letournea)

Information about COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Available

Pfizer

Dosage: 0.3 mL/2 dose series

Diluent: Yes

Interval: 21 days

Age indication: 16 years and older

Storage temps: -112°F and -76°F

Side effects: pain and swelling at the site of injection, fever, chills, tiredness and headache

Moderna

Dosage: multidose vial –10 doses per vial –0.5 mL/2 dose series

Diluent: No

Interval: 28 days

Age Indication: 18 years and older

Storage temps: may be stored frozen (-13°F and 5°F) or refrigerated (36°F and 46°F)

Side effects: pain and swelling at the site of injection, fever, chills, tiredness and headache

Where can I learn about each approved vaccine?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has published detailed factsheets on each approved COVID-19 vaccine, which are available in multiple languages. Please find them here:

[Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)

[Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Should both doses of vaccine come from the same manufacturer?

Yes. The vaccines are not interchangeable. People who get a vaccine that requires two doses must make sure they get the second dose from the same manufacturer as the first dose.

Does anyone know how long it will take after your shot before it becomes effective?

This can vary by vaccine, and we will likely learn more about this over time. For the two currently authorized vaccines, individuals are considered fully vaccinated approximately 10 days after their second dose.

How does the vaccine work?

mRNA vaccines contain material from the virus that causes COVID-19 that gives our cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus.

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness.

The vaccine does not cause you to get COVID-19.

Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

What is the efficacy?

Pfizer –94.1%

Moderna–95%

What other vaccines are in development?

As of December 28, 2020, large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials are in progress or being planned for three COVID-19 vaccines in the United States:

AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine

Janssen's COVID-19 vaccine

Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html>

Why should people who have already been infected with COVID-19, get the vaccine?

It's not clear how long protection lasts from being infected with the virus, so vaccination is still recommended.

People who had COVID-19 can get the vaccine at any time after they've recovered from being ill with COVID-19.

Who should get vaccinated and who should not?

Who should get vaccinated?

- The Moderna vaccine is recommended for people aged 18 years and older.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is recommended for people aged 16 years and older.

Who should NOT get vaccinated?

- If you have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) or an immediate allergic reaction—even if it was not severe—to any ingredient in an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine
- If you have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) or an immediate allergic reaction—even if it was not severe—after getting the first dose of the vaccine, you should not get another dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- An immediate allergic reaction means a reaction within 4 hours of getting vaccinated, including symptoms such as hives, swelling, or wheezing (respiratory distress).
- This includes allergic reactions to polyethylene glycol (PEG) and polysorbate. Polysorbate is not an ingredient in either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine but is closely related to PEG, which is in the vaccines. People who are allergic to PEG or polysorbate should not get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

How does someone report an adverse reaction?

V-Safe app - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>

What is V-Safe and what should we know about it?

V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Through v-safe, you can quickly tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Depending on your answers, someone from CDC may call to check on you and get more information. And v-safe will remind you to get your second COVID-19 vaccine dose if you need one.

If someone does not have a smartphone, how do they report an adverse reaction?

They should contact the facility where they received their vaccination to report the reaction.

Will I have to pay for the vaccine?

No, vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be provided at no cost. For people covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most commercial insurance plans, the vaccine will be covered by insurance with no out-of-pocket cost. For uninsured people, any administrative fees charged by participating providers will be paid for by the federal Provider Relief Fund.

Resources

Maine Immunization Program

www.ImmunizeME.org

Maine Immunization Program COVID-19 Provider's Portal

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/index.shtml>

Maine's COVID-19 Vaccine Website

www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines

U.S. CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>