



For Long-Term Care Facility Staff

What you need to know about the Covid-19 vaccine

Answers to your most pressing questions about the vaccine
and the vaccine mandate at long-term care settings.

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FAQs about the Covid-19 vaccine

A guide to help you feel informed and prepared for the vaccine mandate at long-term care facilities.

Why am I being required to get vaccinated?

The Biden Administration has announced that all healthcare facilities that accept funding from Medicare or Medicaid, including long-term care facilities, must vaccinate their employees or risk losing funding through the program. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator, Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, has announced that the measure has been put in place to ensure the safety of nursing home residents and staff. Data indicates that a higher level of staff vaccination rate is linked to fewer outbreaks among residents.

What if I don't get vaccinated?

CMS and the Biden Administration have announced that if all staff are not vaccinated at health care facilities, including long-term care, those facilities will lose funding from Medicare and Medicaid programs—which are the main ways long-term care facilities are paid. CMS will take a multi-step approach to informing a facility they have not mandated their entire staff, ending with removal from the funding program. This mandate is expected to take full effect in September.

What is the Covid-19 vaccine?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has fully approved the Pfizer vaccine for individuals 16 years or older and is still authorized for emergency use for individuals aged 12 to 15. The FDA has approved the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines for emergency use. These vaccines were created by pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson and are currently available across the United States.

What is new about the vaccines?

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines

The Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines are an mRNA vaccine, a newer type of vaccine to protect against infectious diseases. Unlike traditional vaccines, which contain a live or inactivated version of the disease they protect against, mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. This produces antibodies that protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Johnson & Johnson vaccines

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a viral vector vaccine, which uses a modified version of a different, harmless virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to our cells.

None of the vaccines can give someone Covid-19 or other infections, nor do they affect or interact with our DNA in any way.

Source: "Information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html>; "Information about the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html>; "Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines," CDC, Mar 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mRNA.html>; "FDA Approves First COVID-19 Vaccine," FDA, Aug 2021, <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-covid-19-vaccine>; "Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines," CDC, Sept 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/viralvector.html>; "Covid-19 Vaccines for Healthcare Personnel," CDC, May 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/hcp.html>

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Where can I get the Covid-19 vaccine?

If you did not receive a vaccine during the clinics provided through the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program earlier this year, you can speak to your facility administrators to determine if a vaccine can be made available on site. If a vaccine is not available on site, you can visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to assist in finding a vaccination provider nearest to you.

Is the vaccine effective?

Yes. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been proven to be 95%, 94%, and 66% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 illness, respectively, by the FDA after evaluating and analyzing the results of 38,000 participants in clinical trials for Pfizer, 30,350 participants in clinical trials for Moderna, and over 40,000 participants in clinical trials for Johnson & Johnson.

Do I get to choose which of the vaccines I receive? Does it matter which one I get?

Yes. Now that there is not a shortage of vaccine supply, you are able to call up a pharmacy and ask which vaccines they are offering. However, all three vaccines have been proven to be highly effective. Additionally, most vaccines we already receive, such as the flu shot, have more than one version.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. The FDA authorized the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines' use in the United States for emergency use, citing no serious safety concerns. The FDA has fully approved the Pfizer vaccine for individuals 16 years or older and is still authorized for emergency use for individuals aged 12 to 15. The most common side effects reported were pain at the injection site—which is common with all vaccines—and symptoms like fever and chills.

Does the vaccine cause infertility or miscarriage?

No. The CDC has found no evidence that the vaccine causes fertility problems in women or men, or any evidence that it could cause a miscarriage. The CDC recommends the vaccine for any individual who wants to have children now or in the future, and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends all pregnant and breastfeeding people receive the vaccine, due to the increased risks that a Covid-19 infection can have during pregnancy.

Can I get Covid-19 from the vaccine? Will my getting the vaccine get my family sick?

No. None of the FDA-approved and -authorized vaccines for the coronavirus contain the live Covid-19 virus, meaning you cannot get Covid-19 from receiving the vaccine. The vaccine teaches your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus, which may help prevent you from spreading the virus to your family.

Source: "FDA Briefing Document Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine," FDA, Dec 2020, <https://www.fda.gov/media/144245/download>; "FDA Briefing Document Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine," FDA, Dec 2020, <https://www.fda.gov/media/144434/download>; "The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Interim Recommendation for Use of Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine," CDC, Mar 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7009e4.htm?s_cid=mm7009e4_w; "Importance of COVID-19 Vaccination for Residents of Long-term Care Facilities," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/LTCF-residents.html>; "Information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html>; "Information about the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html>; "Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines," CDC, Sept 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html#:~:text=No.,types%20of%20vaccines%20in%20development>; "COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby," CDC, Aug 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/planning-for-pregnancy.html>

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If I have already recovered from Covid-19, do I still need to get the vaccine? Why?

While reinfection of Covid-19 is uncommon, it is possible. Experts do not know how long someone is protected from the virus after initial infection, nor whether immunity from prior infection can protect against multiple strains of the virus. Due to this information and the risk of severe illness from the virus, even if you did not have a severe case the first time, the CDC recommends vaccination.

After I get the vaccine, can I stop wearing PPE?

No. You still need to protect others around you by wearing PPE and following social distance guidelines until that recommendation is changed by the CDC.

What should I do if I still have concerns?

Check the CDC website for more information and speak to your facility leaders for support.

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