

Covid-19 Vaccination FAQ's NCHC Staff

Updated 12/28/20

We anticipate that many staff members will have questions regarding the Covid-19 vaccinations. We do know that the vaccination is new for every healthcare provider in the United States, but the vaccination process is not. Please see below for answers to questions based on the survey results and what we anticipate receiving. If there is a question that you do not see here, please contact your supervisor and we will get answers for you.

What is an Emergency Use Authorization Vaccines process?

On December 11, 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for a vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in individuals 16 years of age and older. **The emergency use authorization allows the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine to be distributed in the U.S.**

- **What is a mRNA Vaccine?** mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine to protect against infectious diseases. To trigger an immune response, many vaccines put a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies. Not mRNA vaccines. Instead, they teach our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

****Please note that any staff under age 18 will not be able to get the vaccine.**

Does getting the vaccine mean that I won't get COVID-19?

No, not necessarily. Although the vaccine efficacy is 95% based on clinical trials, you may still contract COVID-19. That means at least a 95% reduction in cases of symptomatic COVID-19 disease in those who are vaccinated compared to those who have not received the vaccine.

Based on the risks and benefits of the disease, the CDC supports receiving the vaccine based on the considerations below.

- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, [particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection.
- COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic.

If I am required to continue wearing masks for an undetermined amount of time with or without getting the vaccine, what's the incentive to receive it?

This has been a common question for many staff. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. To slow the spread and end the pandemic, the vaccine is only a part of the puzzle. Depending on how well this goes, we may be able to look at reducing our PPE use

however we can't make that determination yet. Our goal is to lift any restrictions and "get back to normal" as soon as possible however we need to be conservative to ensure safety for all. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

How is the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine administered?

- Moderna vaccine is administered intramuscularly and will be a series of 2 doses (0.5 ml) 1 month apart. **Walgreen's and Wisconsin DHS are providing the Moderna vaccine currently.**

What if another vaccine is approved? Do I need to have the same Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for my second dose? There is no data available on the interchangeability of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine with other COVID-19 vaccines to complete the vaccination series. Individuals who have received one dose of Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine should receive a second dose of Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine to complete the vaccination series.

How often do staff need to be vaccinated?

The CDC has not issued any recommendations on how often people should be vaccinated and they do not know how long immunity lasts until there is more data. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

Will the vaccine be required for staff?

NCHC has developed a vaccination program policy that applies to all NCHC staff. The policy does require all staff to participate in the program however, staff can sign a declination form if they choose to not get the vaccine. We encourage all staff to get the vaccine once available however recommend discussing with your primary care provider as the Moderna vaccine is not recommended for certain groups such as those pregnant or lactating. Staff under 18 years of age are not eligible to receive the vaccine.

What happens when the Covid-19 vaccine is declined?

Staff will need to continue to use the infection control practices that are currently in place. Additional education and testing may be required as well. The COVID-19 vaccine is only part of the plan to combat this pandemic. The CDC recommends that PPE is still used during the pandemic. Staff may likely have future opportunities for vaccinations however we cannot confirm dates at this time.

Who is providing the Covid-19 vaccinations?

NCHC has partnered with Walgreens Pharmacy to administer Covid-19 vaccines to our nursing home residents and staff. This is a program organized through the State of WI Department of Health Services. NCHC will be working in collaboration with our local public health to determine vaccine rationing.

Walgreen's will manage all aspects of the vaccine administration for our residents and staff in our long- term care facilities. We have also received confirmation that NCHC is now approved to be our

own vaccinators for all other NCHC programs. We may also collaborate with community partners for additional phases to support all NCHC staff, but we are ready if the need does arise.

What is the vaccination plan for NCHC staff?

We have a two-pronged plan for vaccinating NCHC staff and long-term residents.

- **Prong 1:** Walgreen's is our contracted provider and will hold 3 vaccination clinics for both long term care facilities. The vaccination clinics are tentatively scheduled for the first week of January 2021. We are in the process of confirming the dates and will share with all staff.
- **Prong 2:** NCHC has been approved to vaccinate staff and patients in all of our programs except for the long-term care programs, and vaccinations will begin in late December or early January. This process will be determined based on the allocation of vaccines in a phased approach. Please see the attached Vaccination Policy for additional details.

What is the process for determining what residents/patients or staff will be eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- NCHC is working closely with Wisconsin DHS and will proceed using the Phase 1A Allocation approach. COVID-19 vaccinations will be available for administration to residents/patients, employees, pending availability, phased approach due to patient population. NCHC has created a phased approach to support future implementation for all healthcare staff.

Are there side effects to the Covid-19 vaccination?

As with any medication, there is risk for side effects. Staff should continue to self-monitor and screen and report any potential side effects. Call your healthcare provider, first, if you have any side effect that bothers you or do not go away. Also please call employee health so we can notify our vaccination provider and provide guidance related to signs and symptoms. Vaccines have less side effects than most medications and it is always appropriate with any medication to weigh the benefits versus the risks. All staff and residents must wait for a minimum of 15 minutes post vaccine for observation.

Adverse reactions following the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that have been reported in the clinical trials include injection site pain, fatigue, headaches, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, injection site swelling and redness, nausea/vomiting, malaise, and lymphadenopathy (swollen lymph nodes). Of note, more people experienced these side effects after the second dose than after the first dose, so it is important for vaccination providers and recipients to expect that there may be some side effects after either dose, but even more so after the second dose.

If a staff member is ill, will they be given the Covid-19 vaccine?

Like the influenza vaccine, staff who are exhibiting sign of illness or a fever of 100.4° or greater, will not be allowed to get the vaccine. They can wait until a later date to receive the vaccine.

The self-screening process will remain in effect for all staff regardless if staff have been vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine. Staff may experience side effects of the

medication and should contact employee health with any concerns.

If a staff member has already tested positive for Covid-19, do they have to get the Covid-19 vaccination?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. The state of Wisconsin currently states, “previous SARS-CoV2 infection, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, is not considered a contraindication to vaccination and serologic testing for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies is not recommended prior to vaccination.”

Do staff need to continue to wear masks after they have completed both doses of the Covid-19 vaccination?

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others. There is not enough information currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a cost to residents to receive the vaccine?

There is no cost for the vaccine however we may obtain your insurance information to bill the insurance carrier for the administration fee if applicable.

Where can I find the best sources of information about the Covid-19 vaccine?

NCHC receives our recommendations from the CDC and the state of Wisconsin, and we strongly recommend that the public do so as well. Information from other sources, including social media, may not be as up to date or accurate. Please visit the CDC's website

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

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>
- CDC Answering Patients' questions FAQ



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