

COVID-19 Vaccinations – What You Need to Know

Updated February 25, 2021

NewYork-Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Columbia Doctors are distributing COVID-19 vaccines in phases as vaccines become available from New York State.

COVID-19 vaccinations are being prioritized according to guidelines defined by state and federal agencies. Please note that the following groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated:

- **All clinical team members caring for patients, all onsite support staff, those redeployed to COVID-related efforts, and employees of NYP, CUIMC, and WCM age 65 and over** are eligible to receive the vaccine at one of the public vaccination sites near you or at the Washington Heights Armory, NYP's public vaccination site, if vaccine supplies are available. Please note that this change does not affect second doses for people who already received their first dose; these will still be given at the local sites. Check the [Infonet](#) for details on availability at the Armory.
- **Employees of NYP, CUIMC, and WCM age 65 and over** who are New York State residents may be vaccinated at a public site in New York City, Westchester, or another location that may be nearby to where you live. You can find public vaccination locations [here](#).
- **Individuals age 65 and over who are residents of New York City** are being vaccinated at the 168th Street Armory. Find more information, and make vaccination appointments, on [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#) through our [Connect](#) app.
- **New York City residents age 18 and over who have eligible medical conditions** are being vaccinated at the 168th Street Armory beginning on February 23. The list of medical conditions can be found [here](#). Find more information, and make vaccination appointments, on [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#) through our [Connect](#) app.

Vaccines are not yet being offered to those who do not meet the guidelines outlined by state and federal agencies. We anticipate that guidelines will change in the future. Please note that **vaccination locations and hours are subject to change** due to vaccine supply and need. Please look for the most up-to-date locations and hours [here](#) on the Infonet or in the Employee Information section on the [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#) site.

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General FAQs

I have more questions about the vaccine or vaccinations. Who should I contact?

Please check your emails and the videos and other information posted on the [NYP Infonet](#) and [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#), for the latest updates. If you still have questions, you may call the WHS COVID Hotline at 646-697- 9470 or send an email to Vaccines@nyp.org.

Why vaccinate against COVID-19?

There is no cure for COVID-19 and hundreds of thousands of people have died from COVID-19. A vaccine is a proven and safe way to help your body fight an infectious disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination as the first and best way to protect against COVID-19.

Why are we among the first to get the vaccine?

The CDC and New York State have created recommendations for vaccine distribution that have prioritized front-line health-care workers and those who provide on-site support for those front-line workers to be vaccinated first. NYP, Weill Cornell, and Columbia are required to follow these recommendations.

Who makes the COVID-19 vaccine?

Several manufacturers have been working to produce COVID-19 vaccines. The first vaccines authorized by the FDA are made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna; both are very similar in how they work and both are similarly effective and safe. We have been receiving vaccine shipments for both Pfizer and Moderna.

Are these COVID-19 vaccines effective?

Yes. Early results from clinical trials show greater than 90% effectiveness at protecting people from symptomatic COVID-19 illness.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

The vaccine helps you develop antibodies to fight COVID-19. It does not contain any part of the virus itself.

Am I required to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Not at this time, but we strongly encourage you to get vaccinated. The CDC recommends a vaccine as the first and best way to protect against COVID-19.

Do I have to pay for my vaccine?

No. The vaccine will be provided to you at no cost.

How will the vaccines be administered?

These vaccines are given by intramuscular injection. Two doses will be required. The vaccine you receive for the second dose must be the same as the first dose. At the time of your first vaccination, you will be scheduled for your second vaccination.

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Should I know which COVID-19 vaccine I am getting?

Yes. These vaccines require two doses to be effective. The second dose of vaccine must be the same type as the first one you received. You will be told this information at the time you receive your vaccine.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine contain blood or blood fractions?

No. The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines that NYP is receiving does not contain blood or blood fractions.

How many NYP, Weill Cornell, and Columbia staff have been vaccinated so far?

The number of NYP, Weill Cornell, and Columbia healthcare personnel (HCP) who have been vaccinated is shown on the Infonet and Epic COVID-19 vaccine dashboard. All HCP who want to be vaccinated will be vaccinated as quickly as possible. We ask for your continued patience as we continue to expand our vaccination efforts.

Does the vaccine prevent you from contracting COVID-19?

The clinical trials for both the Pfizer vaccine and for the Moderna vaccine found that two doses of the vaccines were >90% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 illness, including severe illness. It is likely, but not certain, that the COVID-19 vaccine will also reduce asymptomatic infection and transmission and there are ongoing studies to further clarify this issue. However, until experts have more information it is important to continue to follow all safety precautions, including wearing a mask when around others, practicing social distancing, wearing all appropriate PPE in the hospital, and performing frequent hand hygiene.

Can I go on with my normal activities during the day after getting the vaccine (working out)?

You can go on with your normal activities the day after being vaccinated.

I wanted to know how to register for v-safe. On the CDC website it said that my healthcare provider would provide the link. I already received both doses of the vaccine and wanted to register for v-safe.

Thank you for your interest in v-safe. You can register at <https://vsafe.cdc.gov/>.

Am I able to choose which vaccine I receive? How do I know which one is best for me to take?

Health care personnel will not be able to choose the type of COVID-19 vaccine they receive. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are both mRNA vaccines and have extremely similar efficacy and safety. NYP is receiving both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine. There are no recommendations for specific individuals who should get the Pfizer vs. the Moderna vaccine. We are unable to predict which vaccine is available on a given day at a given campus and this is subject to current availability.

Is there a sense of when the vaccine may become mandatory for someone wanting to fly?

To date, there are no recommendations for making the vaccine mandatory for people choosing to fly and it is unknown when or if that will occur.

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Vaccine Eligibility and Scheduling

Where can we get the vaccine? What are the days and hours of operation?

Locations and hours for vaccination can be found [here](#) on the Infonet or in the Employee Information section on the VaccineTogetherNY.org site.

I want to get the vaccine. When can I get vaccinated?

NewYork-Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Columbia Doctors are distributing COVID-19 vaccines in phases as it becomes available. COVID-19 vaccinations are being prioritized according to guidelines defined by state and federal agencies. Please see the top of this document for current eligibility groups. Our goal, ultimately, is to make it available to everyone across our organizations.

Is first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine still available to clinical staff?

Vaccine administration is subject to change. At this time, the first dose is still available for clinical staff. Please check [this link](#).

Are NYPH volunteers eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, active, patient-facing NYPH volunteers are eligible to be vaccinated. They need to bring their NYP ID badges with them to get vaccinated once the Volunteer Services department has communicated with them that they are eligible.

Should employees, students or patients that have been immunized against COVID-19 in another country get vaccinated here in the U.S.?

If someone completes the vaccination process in another country, we would not repeat the vaccine process here. If they will be coming to the United States and meet the requirements to be vaccinated as defined by the New York State Department of Health, we would vaccinate these individuals if they are receiving BOTH doses here. If they receive one dose in another country, they need to receive the second dose there. Unfortunately, we cannot provide the second dose.

I am a research assistant in a research lab. I am employed by Columbia. Am I eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at Columbia?

Regardless of age, if you come in direct contact with patients or study subjects and have been cleared by your department to be vaccinated under phase 1A (based on your work activities), you may receive your first dose. Currently first doses for Columbia employees have been moved to the Armory site. An appointment is not needed for this first dose if you are a CUIMC/NYP/WCMC employee in phase 1A (i.e., meet criteria based on your patient-facing work activities). Locations and hours can be found [here](#) on the Infonet or in the Employee Information section on the VaccineTogtherNY.org site.

I am eligible to receive the vaccine now but was not able to be vaccinated with my department. Will I still be able to be vaccinated in the future?

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We recognize that some HCP may miss getting the COVID-19 vaccine the first go around. They will still be able to be vaccinated. NYP has developed a plan for further vaccine distribution that is also dependent on NYS Department of Health Department guidance and vaccine supply. Please check [this link](#).

Are clinical students eligible to receive the vaccine?

Yes, NYP has included clinical students in our vaccination plan.

Are voluntary physicians eligible to receive the vaccine?

Yes, we are currently vaccinating voluntary physicians.

Are affiliated physicians eligible to receive the vaccine at NYP?

If you see NYP patients on behalf of NYP and have an NYP, CU, or WCM ID badge, then you are able to get the vaccine. Locations and hours can be found [here](#) on the Infonet or in the Employee Information section on the [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#) site.

Are physicians who only see patients virtually eligible to receive the vaccine?

As per NYS Department of Health (DOH) and CDC guidance, we are currently vaccinating health care personnel (HCP) who work onsite in clinical settings. We are developing plans for other groups of HCP that will be based on DOH and CDC guidance, but plan to vaccinate all NYP, Weill Cornell, and Columbia University HCP who wish to be vaccinated. Employees of NYP, CUIMC, and WCM **age 65 and over** who are not patient-facing who **reside in New York City** are now also eligible to be vaccinated at the Armory.

Are we offering vaccination to any of our industry vendors?

Any patient facing vendors/contractors **whose primary work location is one of our hospital sites** are eligible to be vaccinated. Vendors who come on site but do not primarily work at one of our sites are not eligible at this time, but we will inform them when vaccine becomes available to them.

When will patients be able to be vaccinated?

Individuals age 65 and over who reside in New York City are being vaccinated at the Armory on 168th Street across from the NYP-CU campus. Find more information, and make vaccination appointments, on [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#) through our Connect app.

For more information on recommendations for vaccine distribution see:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-information-providers>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm695152e2.htm>

Can an inpatient get a COVID vaccine?

At NYP, COVID-19 vaccinations are currently only being administered to patients at the 168th Street Armory. Based on limited vaccine supply, New York State has prioritized vaccination at mass vaccination sites where vaccine can be administered most efficiently to the largest number of eligible individuals. Subacute and long-term nursing facilities have processes in place to provide vaccination to their residents as well.

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When will employees who are NOT providing clinical or onsite support or who are working remotely receive the vaccine?

NewYork-Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Columbia Doctors are distributing COVID-19 vaccines in phases as it becomes available. COVID-19 vaccinations are being prioritized according to guidelines defined by state and federal agencies. Aside from patient-facing clinical and supportive staff, at this time staff who have been notified of their redeployment into efforts around COVID care or staff who are **65 and older who work offsite and reside in New York City** are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

Can a healthcare worker’s family member receive the COVID vaccine at this time?

Family members aged 65 and older who reside in New York City can schedule an appointment using the ColumbiaDoctors, Weill Cornell Medicine, and NewYork-Presbyterian [Connect online patient portal](#). Individuals aged 65 and older who are not ColumbiaDoctors, Weill Cornell Medicine, and NewYork-Presbyterian patients can set up a Connect account by visiting [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#). The number of people we can vaccinate each day will depend on various factors, including the amount of available vaccine. Family members who are younger than 65 years of age are not yet eligible based on New York State guidelines.

If I qualify to be vaccinated outside of NYP, can I receive the vaccine elsewhere?

Although it is suggested you get vaccinated at NYP, you may go elsewhere if you choose. If you do get vaccinated elsewhere, please fill out the WH&S outside vaccination documentation form [here](#) and email to whs-datamanagement@nyp.org.

I am currently on maternity leave and was unavailable when most of my co-workers received the first dose. May I simply show up with my work ID during vaccination hours for my first dose?

Yes, if you are out on leave (but NOT on home isolation due to COVID-19 infection or quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure), you may come in to get vaccinated. A link to the [current schedule can be found here](#). Please note, this schedule will be update weekly so check it as you are closer to the day you plan to come in. We are not making appointments for first doses; you can walk into the vaccination site at your hospital to receive your first dose.

I am having a baby in a few weeks and so am delaying my COVID-19 vaccination until our baby is born. Can I schedule my first dose in advance?

We recognize that some health care personnel may miss getting the COVID-19 vaccine the first go around. They will still be able to be vaccinated. A link to the [current schedule can be found here](#). Please note, this schedule will be updated weekly so check it as you are closer to the day you plan to come in. We are not making appointments for first doses; you can walk into the vaccination site at your hospital to receive your first dose.

For those 65 and over, there’s no appointment necessary?

Individuals 65 years of age and older who live in New York City are eligible to be vaccinated at the Washington Heights Armory by appointment only. For more information on making appointments for individuals 65 years of age and older, please see [VaccineTogetherNY.org](#).

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For **employees**: all clinical team members caring for patients, all onsite support staff, voluntary staff, those who have been notified of their redeployment into efforts around COVID care or vaccination, and those who are 65 years of age and older who work offsite and reside in New York City are eligible to get vaccinated. With the exception of the NYP Westchester Behavioral Health Center campus where appointments are required, eligible healthcare personnel may walk into the vaccination site for the campus where they work. For questions about where/when to go on each campus, please go to the Employee Information section on the VaccineTogetherNY.org site. Please note, this schedule will be updated weekly so check it as you are closer to the day you plan to come in.

Are people under 65 with medical conditions able to be vaccinated?

New York City residents age 18 and over who have eligible medical conditions are being vaccinated at the 168th Street Armory beginning on February 23. The list of medical conditions can be found [here](#). Find more information, and make vaccination appointments, on VaccineTogetherNY.org through our [Connect](#) app.

Is NYP currently giving COVID vaccines to front line/essential workers who do not work at NYP?

We are offering vaccine to our clinical team members caring for patients, our onsite support staff, and those redeployed to COVID-related efforts, as well as to individuals age 65 and over who reside in New York City. Essential workers (e.g. teachers, FDNY, NYPD, etc.) are being vaccinated elsewhere at non-NYP vaccination sites.

Are former employees of NYP, Columbia or Cornell able to get vaccinated at NYP?

We are not able to vaccinate individuals who are no longer employed at NYP, Columbia or Cornell. However, **individuals age 65 and over who reside in New York City** are being vaccinated at the 168th Street Armory across from the NYP-CU campus. Find more information, and make vaccination appointments, on VaccineTogetherNY.org through our Connect app.

Whom should I contact regarding technical issues in Connect when trying to schedule a vaccine appointment (e.g., error message after clicking "Schedule COVID-19 vaccine")?

Thank you for calling this to our attention. You may reach out to Connect Technical Support at 646-962-4200.

I am eligible to receive a vaccine because I work on-site, but needed to delay receiving the first dose. If vaccinations will no longer be available at all hospital sites after Friday, February 12, how do I make an appointment to be vaccinated at the Armory when I am ready to be vaccinated?

Staff may still be eligible to receive the vaccine at one of the public vaccination sites near them, or at the Washington Heights Armory, NYP's public vaccination site, if vaccine supplies are available. If the Armory is offering vaccines to employees, they may walk in and do not need an appointment for the first dose.

I am an off-site employee who is now eligible to receive the COVID vaccine. I am trying to find out as to the availability of first dose vaccines at NYP Lawrence.

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All clinical team members caring for patients, all onsite support staff, and those redeployed to COVID-related efforts are eligible to be vaccinated. For questions about where/when to go, please go to the Employee Information section on the [VaccineTogetherNY.org](https://www.vaccinetogetherny.org) site.

Process for Receiving Vaccine

How can I schedule an appointment to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Currently, you do not need to schedule an appointment to get the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Eligible health care personnel may walk into the Armory. For questions about where and when vaccines are available, please go to the Employee Information section on the [VaccineTogetherNY.org](https://www.vaccinetogetherny.org) site. This information changes weekly so please review close to the time you plan to come in.

At the time you receive your first dose, you will be scheduled for an appointment for the second dose in the appropriate timeframe which is 21 days for the Pfizer vaccine and 28 days for the Moderna vaccine. It is important to keep this appointment for your second dose.

Can I get my vaccine before a day off? I am concerned about potentially getting a reaction from the vaccine, and therefore not being able to come to work the next day.

As of January 28, of the over 40,000 health care personnel who have received the COVID-19 vaccines at NYP thus far, vaccine-related reactions preventing people from coming to work have been exceedingly rare.

Can Support Care Time be used for reactions to the COVID vaccine received at the hospital?

In the clinical trials of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, a higher proportion of people had reactions after the second dose. However, most reactions were still described as mild to moderate, lasted a short time, and such reactions do respond to Tylenol and to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). If an employee has Support Care Time, it can be used if time off is needed due to reactions to the COVID vaccine.

What should I bring to the vaccine site as proof of identity? I do not have a driver's license or NY State ID.

Your NewYork-Presbyterian, Cornell, or Columbia ID badge is sufficient proof of identity.

If I can get the vaccine sooner through my primary care physician, should I do that?

We recommend that you receive your COVID-19 vaccine at NYP. The COVID-19 vaccine is currently only being distributed through hospital systems, in order to vaccinate health care personnel first as per the New York State recommended phased vaccine allocation. You will not be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccines from personal physicians at this time.

Should I be tested for COVID-19 before receiving the vaccine?

No. Testing of asymptomatic individuals for COVID-19 infection is not required or recommended prior to receiving the vaccine.

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How do I get the Connect activation code?

You will receive an activation code after your first dose or you can sign up by going to <https://www.myConnectNYC.org/newuser/> and clicking the Self Sign Up button.

Getting Vaccinated AFTER Travel, Having COVID-19, Being Exposed to COVID-19, Receiving Other Vaccines, or Receiving COVID-19 Monoclonal Antibodies or Convalescent Plasma

I traveled outside of the tristate area. If I have a negative COVID test result on day 1 post-travel and am back to direct patient care, will I be able to get the vaccination, or do I need to wait until after a negative test on day 4 post-travel?

As long as you are allowed to work and not on home quarantine or home isolation, you may get vaccinated after returning from travel. Therefore, once you have tested negative on day 1 post travel and are back to work, as long as you have no symptoms of COVID-19 you can get vaccinated before your day 4 test.

I currently have COVID-19 INFECTION, should I still get the vaccine now? How long should I wait after I recover to get it?

Data from clinical trials show that the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are SAFE in people who had past COVID-19 infection. Vaccination should be offered to people regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection. Testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus or for antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 to decide when to get vaccinated is NOT recommended.

CDC recommends that people who currently have COVID-19 infection wait to be vaccinated **UNTIL they meet criteria to discontinue isolation**. Generally, isolation can be discontinued when 1) at least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms or a positive test if a person has been asymptomatic; 2) at least 24 hours have passed being afebrile without antipyretics; and 3) symptoms are markedly improved. Healthcare personnel (HCP) with COVID-19 must be cleared to return to work by Workforce Health and Safety.

According to CDC guidelines, HCP who had COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days can choose to delay vaccination until near the end of the 90-day period in order to allow other HCP to be vaccinated first, if there is limited vaccine supply. This is because current evidence suggests that people are less likely to get reinfected with COVID-19 in the 90 days after their initial infection. However, this is a strategy to address limited vaccine supply and NOT for safety concerns, since current data from clinical trials have shown that the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are safe in people who had past COVID-19. **NYP has enough vaccine supply to vaccinate people who recently had COVID-19 and strongly encourages those with recent COVID-19 to be vaccinated.**

I have antibodies to COVID-19. Should I still get vaccinated?

People with antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, should still be vaccinated. This is because people can be reinfected with SARS-CoV-2 and because we don't know how long people will be protected from existing antibodies.

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I was recently sick with fever and cough but tested negative for COVID; when should I get vaccinated?

In general, CDC recommends that people who have moderate or severe acute illness with fever wait to get vaccinated with any type of vaccine, including the COVID-19 vaccines, until their acute illness has resolved.

If an individual is not feeling well, what symptoms are considered severe enough to not be given the vaccine? If someone has a cold with slight chills and minor sore throat, can the vaccine still be given?

Chills and sore throat, even if mild, could be consistent with COVID-19 symptoms. Please call the WH&S Hotline at 646 - 697 - 9470 to report your symptoms and receive guidance on potential testing for COVID-19. Once you are cleared to return to work by the WH&S Hotline, you may receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Staff with a history of having had COVID and antibodies say they are concerned because they are hearing that they are at higher risk for more serious symptoms after vaccination. Are there any statistics on that?

Based on data from the clinical trials, people with COVID-19 antibodies prior to vaccination did NOT have more serious symptoms following vaccination than people without antibodies. In the clinical trials, vaccine-related reactions such as fatigue, headache, body aches, chills, and fever were more common after the second dose as compared to the first dose. Nonetheless, the vast majority of individuals with vaccine-related reactions have felt well enough to work. However, if you develop fever after receiving the vaccine, please stay home and contact WH&S.

I am currently under QUARANTINE after being EXPOSED to someone with COVID-19. Should I come in to be vaccinated?

No, please wait to be vaccinated until your quarantine period is over as instructed by WH&S. Generally, home quarantine can be discontinued when 1) at least 10 days have passed since the last exposure; 2) you have not developed any symptoms of COVID-19; and 3) if you were tested, you tested negative for COVID-19.

How long after receiving ANOTHER VACCINE should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?

CDC recommends that people who have received another vaccine wait **14 days** between the COVID vaccine and other vaccines. This is because simultaneous administration of other vaccines and the COVID-19 vaccine has not yet been studied.

If I received a MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TREATMENT for COVID-19, can I still get the vaccine and/or should I wait a period of time?

CDC recommends that people who received monoclonal antibody treatment or convalescent plasma for COVID-19 illness wait **90 days** after receiving monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Until we learn more about vaccination in this population, this is a precaution to avoid the theoretical possibility of interference of the antibody treatment with the body's ability to produce an immune response to the vaccine.

Getting the SECOND COVID-19 Vaccine Dose – General

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How does the vaccine formulation differ between the first and second dose? I have heard that the second dose is much “stronger” than the first and more side effects can be experienced.

There is no difference in vaccine formulation between the first and second dose. You are receiving the same vaccine twice. Many vaccines require more than one dose. The second dose strengthens the immune response that began with the first dose and the second dose helps make the immune response more long-lasting. It is important to receive both doses of the COVID-19 vaccines, since these vaccines were studied as a two-dose regimen and the known safety and effectiveness is based on participants receiving both doses.

If I receive the first dose of the vaccine, am I guaranteed to get a second dose? Is there any reason to worry, based on the current push to releasing reserved second doses, that we will not have the doses available for our second vaccine on our scheduled date?

We expect to have enough second doses to offer to all of our health care personnel who received first doses. At the time of receipt of the first dose, you will be scheduled for your second dose in the appropriate timeframe. It is important to keep this appointment.

Governor Cuomo announced on January 21 that NYC will run out of first dose vaccines in the next three days. I am scheduled for my second Moderna shot on Saturday. Is it likely that this will be postponed or canceled based on limited supply? It looks like supply of second doses is also very low right now.

We have enough supply to provide second doses for people who received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

I received my first dose COVID-19 vaccination this week, but didn’t schedule the second appointment. How do I schedule my second dose vaccination in advance to secure my appointment for my recommended date?

You should have been scheduled for a second dose appointment when you left your first appointment. Please go to Connect <https://www.myConnectNYC.org/newuser/> to register and confirm your second appointment is scheduled.

My appointment date for my second dose no longer works for me. Can I reschedule it? How do I reschedule?

It is strongly recommended that you keep your appointment date for your second dose. If you need to reschedule your second dose, your appointment should be rescheduled during the same week as your original appointment. If you do need to reschedule, you may do so through NYP CONNECT. If you are not currently registered, you may do so here: <https://www.myConnectNYC.org/newuser/>. You should be able to reschedule after the second dose appointment is missed.

Can I receive a proper COVID vaccination card at the time of my second shot? I received a copy at my first dose. What if I lost my card?

NYP depends on what the CDC provides us regarding the COVID-19 vaccine cards. You can see if the vaccinating clinicians are able to provide you one when you go for your second dose. If they are, they will need to put both doses on this card for your records. If you lost your card, when you arrive for your second dose you can either receive a replacement card or a photocopy

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of a card. The clinician will fill in both the dates of your first dose and your second dose so it is complete.

I have received both vaccine doses but have lost the vaccine card, where can I get this document again?

Please reach out to your campus's Workforce Health & Safety office and they will be able to assist you with gaining documentation of your vaccines.

After I receive the initial dose (of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine), do I need to come for the second dose on exactly day 21 or 28? Or could I receive the second dose any time after day 21 or 28?

CDC recommends that people receive their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine 21 days after their first dose, and their second dose of the Moderna vaccine 28 days after their first dose, with a **4 day grace period**. This is because these are the regimens that were studied in the clinical trials and for which we have data for efficacy and safety. If a person is unable to receive their second dose within the recommended interval, the second dose should be given as close as possible to the recommended interval. However, if it is not feasible to adhere to the recommended interval, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be scheduled for administration **up to 6 weeks** after the first dose. There are currently limited data on efficacy of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines administered beyond this window. If the second dose is administered beyond these intervals, there is no need to restart the series.

My brother-in-law received his first COVID vaccination on February 14, at a Walgreens in Connecticut. He received the Moderna vaccine. He is scheduled to receive his second dose at a different Walgreens in Connecticut and has learned that the Walgreens location is only administering the Pfizer vaccine. Is it okay to combine vaccines?

According to CDC, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable with each other and they state that all efforts should be made to receive the second dose from the same manufacturer as the first dose. This is because the safety and effectiveness of getting the first vaccine dose from Moderna and the second vaccine dose from Pfizer has not been studied.

I have an appointment scheduled for my second dose but need to come later in the day. Can I reschedule the time?

Please come at any time on the day you are scheduled, but please check the [hours of operation](#) of the vaccination site at your hospital.

Can I receive my second dose at a different campus than I received the first?

You must receive the second dose at the same campus you received the first. Locations and hours can be found [here](#) on the Infonet.

I experienced soreness and induration after receiving the first vaccine. I read that induration more commonly occurs after the second dose. Should I take Benadryl before I receive the second dose? Will switching the arm I get vaccinated in make a difference?

There are currently no precautions recommended to avoid induration at the vaccine site. Premedication BEFORE the onset of reactions is not recommended. Antihistamines like

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Benadryl can help relieve itching and hives, but may not help with induration. Tylenol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and/or cold compresses may help with soreness and induration. It is unlikely that vaccinating in the other arm would help avoid induration.

I got my second shot on January 25 but took a Tylenol about an hour before getting it. I was not aware that I could not do that and would like to know if I am still fully vaccinated or if I have get re-vaccinated?

While CDC does not recommend taking medications such as Tylenol or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) prophylactically before receiving the COVID-19 vaccines because of the possibility they could dampen the immune response, this is only a theoretical concern and not known to reduce response to the vaccine. CDC does NOT recommend re-vaccination (i.e., a third dose) under any circumstances at present since data are not available on the giving 3 doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Given Bill de Blasio has been talking about delaying second doses, I was wondering if this will be affecting NYP employees who have their second dose scheduled. I received my first dose a few days ago and, therefore, will not be getting it until nearly mid-February, which is why I'm concerned about receiving the vaccine outside the 21 +/- 2 day window.

We expect to have enough second doses to offer without delay to all of our health care personnel who received first doses. CDC recommends that people receive their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine 21 days after their first dose, and their second dose of the Moderna vaccine 28 days after their first dose, with a **4-day grace period**. This is because these are the regimens that were studied in the clinical trials and for which we have data for efficacy and safety. If a person is unable to receive their second dose within the recommended interval, the second dose should be given as close as possible to the recommended interval. However, if it is not feasible to adhere to the recommended interval, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be scheduled for administration **up to 6 weeks** after the first dose.

Getting the SECOND COVID-19 Vaccine Dose AFTER Travel, Having COVID-19 or Being Exposed to COVID-19

I traveled to a non-contiguous state after receiving my first dose of vaccine. Do I need to delay my second dose until after my day 4 post-travel test is negative?

As long as you are allowed to work and not on home quarantine or home isolation, you may get vaccinated after returning from travel. Therefore, once you have tested negative on day 1 post travel and are back to work, as long as you have no symptoms of COVID-19 you can get your second dose before your day 4 test.

I TESTED POSITIVE for COVID shortly after receiving my first dose of the vaccine. Should I still get the second dose? If so, when?

If you develop a COVID-19 infection after your first vaccine dose, data from clinical trials show that the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are SAFE in people who had past COVID-19 infection. CDC recommends that people who currently have COVID-19 infection wait to be vaccinated UNTIL

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they meet criteria to discontinue isolation. **Upon meeting the criteria to return to work and clearance by the WH&S hotline**, you may receive the second dose of the vaccine. Generally, isolation can be discontinued when 1) at least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms or a positive test if a person has been asymptomatic; 2) at least 24 hours have passed being afebrile without antipyretics; and 3) symptoms are **markedly improved**.

If you are unable to receive the second dose on the originally scheduled date, it should be given as close as possible to the original date of the appointment. To reschedule, you may do so through [Connect](#). If you are not currently registered, you may do so here: <https://www.myConnectNYC.org/newuser/>. You should be able to reschedule after the second dose appointment is missed.

I was EXPOSED to COVID-19 shortly after receiving my first dose of the vaccine and am on home QUARANTINE. Can I come in for my second dose as scheduled if I have tested negative and have no symptoms?

You should NOT come in for your appointment while on quarantine, even if you have tested negative and have no symptoms. Please wait to be vaccinated until AFTER your quarantine period following exposure to someone with COVID-19 is over and you are cleared to return to work by WH&S. Generally, home quarantine following exposure can be discontinued when 1) at least 10 days have passed since the last exposure; 2) you have not developed any symptoms of COVID-19; and 3) if you were tested, you tested negative for COVID-19. If you are unable to receive the second dose within the recommended interval, the second dose should be given **as close as possible** to the original date of the appointment. If it is not feasible to adhere to the recommended interval, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be scheduled for administration **up to 6 weeks** after the first dose. To reschedule, you may do so through [Connect](#). If you are not currently registered, you may do so here: <https://www.myConnectNYC.org/newuser/>. You should be able to reschedule after the second dose appointment is missed.

Does delaying the second dose because of quarantine affect the vaccine's effectiveness?

Health care personnel (HCP) who are on quarantine following a COVID-19 exposure cannot be vaccinated until their quarantine period ends and they have received return to work clearance from Workforce Health & Safety. While it is recommended that people receive the second dose at the recommended interval, 21 days following the first dose for Pfizer and 28 days following the second dose for Moderna, the second dose can be received at a longer interval if needed to accommodate the quarantine period following exposure. If it is not feasible to adhere to the recommended interval, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be scheduled for administration **up to 6 weeks** after the first dose. There are currently limited data on efficacy of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines administered beyond this window.

Vaccine Volunteer Opportunities

How can I volunteer to help with the vaccination efforts at the Armory?

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for this important initiative. **If you are an NYP, Columbia or Weill Cornell employee, please click [here](#)** for more information and to sign up to

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volunteer at the Armory. If you are a **physician who does not work for NYP/Columbia/Weill Cornell**, you can apply to volunteer for the NYP immunization clinics through the [NYP Office for Physician Recruitment](#) website. If you are a **non-physician, non-NYP** employee COVID vaccine volunteer, please click [here](#) for more information.

Vaccine Safety - General

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. Extensive clinical trials were conducted with thousands of participants for the FDA to evaluate the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. This was a thorough process and no steps were skipped in the trials. In addition, New York State has set up a task force to review the vaccine before distribution in New York, and our own experts have reviewed the information.

Can I contract COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. It is impossible for the vaccine to give you COVID-19; it does not contain the live SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19.

What are some of the reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine?

While some people have no reaction to the vaccine, sometimes after vaccination the process of building immunity can cause symptoms. These symptoms are normal and not dangerous. The most common reactions reported are soreness or redness at the injection site. Besides fever, Less common reactions include fatigue, headache, muscle aches, and joint aches and sometimes fever. These reactions occur for a limited time, are more likely to be experienced with the second dose, and can be treated with Tylenol or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). You will receive more information at the time of vaccination.

What was the percentage of Black people included in the vaccine trials? Is there information about how many people with comorbidities and autoimmune diseases were included in the trials?

Thank you for your excellent questions. The FDA specifically wanted the participants in the COVID-19 vaccine trials to be diverse. Thus, both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials were designed to increase the number of persons from racial and ethnic minorities, as well as those with medical conditions (e.g., chronic lung disease, cardiac disease, severe obesity, diabetes, HIV, etc.) that placed them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease. Approximately 9-10% of participants were Black/African-American (close to the approximately 13% of Americans who are Black/African-American), 21-28% of participants were Hispanic, and 21-22% of participants had the medical conditions as above. The vaccine safety (side effects/reactions) and efficacy were similar in all of these subgroups.

Are you able to share the list of COVID vaccine contraindications that are reviewed with employees when they present for their vaccine? It would be helpful for employees to review and if they have questions discuss with their PCPs. This would be helpful to have before traveling to a vaccine site and wait only to realize they have a contraindication and can't be vaccinated.

The vaccine employee screening questionnaire [is posted on the Infonet](#). The only absolute contraindication to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is if you have previously had a

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hypersensitivity allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis within 4 hours of receiving a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or if you previously had hypersensitivity allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis to any of the COVID-19 vaccine components. Reasons for delaying the vaccine or for requiring additional counseling are also listed on the form. Also, you can read more about allergies in this [COVID vaccine FAQs document](#).

Are there any contraindications to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

The only contraindication is for individuals who have a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to any component of the vaccine. See [Vaccine Safety - Allergies section](#) below for more information.

Should I take Tylenol prior to getting the vaccine, prophylactically?

If you experience symptoms such as soreness at the injection site, headache, muscle or joint aches or fever after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, CDC recommends taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) or Tylenol when symptoms begin. However, CDC does NOT recommend taking these medications prophylactically because of the theoretic possibility they could dampen the immune response.

Are there any long-term side effects related to the vaccine?

Based on currently available data, there are no known long-term side effects, but clinical trials and other safety studies being conducted by the CDC are still underway to gather additional information regarding long-term side effects.

I had COVID-19 earlier this year and recently tested positive again for antibodies in my blood serology. Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine on top of still having antibodies?

Yes, in clinical trials the vaccine appears to be safe in individuals who have previously had COVID-19 or have antibodies. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone may be protected from getting COVID-19 again; therefore, the current recommendation is to receive the vaccine. See [Getting Vaccinated After Having COVID-19 section](#) above for more information.

Is Bell's Palsy a side effect of the vaccine? If I have a history of Bell's palsy, should I receive the vaccine?

During the Pfizer and the Moderna trials, the number of people who experienced Bell's Palsy cases was no greater than the number of people in the general population who experience Bell's Palsy. Thus, experts do not think that the COVID-19 vaccines cause Bell's Palsy, but both the CDC and FDA will be monitoring Bell's Palsy in people who have received the vaccine.

Thus far, there are no data available for the risk of Bell's Palsy occurring after vaccination in someone who had Bell's Palsy after birth. However, as described above, the vaccines are not thought to cause Bell's Palsy. CDC does not recommend withholding vaccine from those with a history of Bell's palsy.

If I need to report an adverse reaction to the vaccine, how do I do so?

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Reactions that are expected after the COVID-19 vaccine such as mild to moderate pain at the injection site, fatigue, body aches and headache that resolve within a few days do not need to be reported. Reactions that last longer or include other symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat should be reported to the WH&S Hotline 646-697-9470.

Severe adverse reactions that occur after the COVID-19 vaccine that require medical attention in the Emergency Department or result in hospitalization must be reported by NYP, Columbia, and Weill Cornell providers to the CDC's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) online at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html> (preferred) or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

Also, health care personnel can register with the CDC's V-safe program <https://vsafe.cdc.gov/> which is a voluntary program that monitors reactions after COVID-19 vaccination.

If you have any further questions about reporting adverse reactions please call the WH&S Hotline 646-697-9470.

Vaccine Safety - Allergies

I have severe allergies, is it safe for me to receive the vaccine?

The vaccine is currently contraindicated only for individuals who have had a hypersensitivity allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis to any component of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. Those with a history of hypersensitivity allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis to another vaccine or an injectable medication should consult with their allergist whether they can safely receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Finally, those with all other allergies, such as to food, the environment, or oral medications, can still safely receive the vaccine.

[Click here](#) to see Dr. Forese and Dr. Jordan Orange discuss the COVID-19 vaccine and allergies.

I have a shellfish allergy (anaphylaxis). Is this a contraindication to vaccination? How long should I be monitored after getting the vaccine? Are epi pens available in case they are needed?

Anaphylaxis to shellfish is not considered a contraindication to COVID-19 vaccination. However, if health care personnel (HCP) have had anaphylaxis to anything, they must indicate that on their Employee Screening Questionnaire for COVID Vaccine when they are registering for vaccination. They also will need to be observed for **30 minutes**. Each of the vaccine administration sites has the appropriate treatment for anaphylaxis and the vaccination staff are trained in administering epinephrine therapy, if needed.

Is it safe for people with allergies to egg products or protein to receive the vaccine?

People with a history of being allergic to egg product or protein can receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

I have anaphylactic reactions to certain foods and oral lamisil, can I still get the vaccine?

There is not a contraindication to receive the COVID-19 vaccines for people with anaphylactic reactions to food or oral lamisil. However, please indicate this on the 'Employee Screening

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Questionnaire for COVID Vaccine' that you will receive before your vaccination. Note: you will be observed for **30 minutes** after receiving the vaccine.

I received allergy shots on a regular basis, should I change my allergy shot schedule before I receive my second dose of the Moderna COVID vaccine?

There are no specific data available regarding the timing of allergy shots and the COVID-19 vaccine. You should receive your second dose of the Moderna vaccine 28 days after the first dose. Please discuss the timing of your allergy shots with your allergist.

Vaccine Safety – Comorbid Conditions and Concurrent Medications

Can persons with an autoimmune disease receive the vaccine?

Data for people with autoimmune disease are currently limited, but the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) currently recommends offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people with autoimmune disease. CDC also recommends counseling people with autoimmune disease about the lack of data and the potential for lower vaccine effectiveness due to a reduced immune response.

Do we know if the vaccine is safe in people with Type 1 Diabetes?

There are no current contraindications to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine for individuals who have comorbid medical conditions including diabetes. Based on data from clinical trials, the vaccine appears to be safe and effective in people with diabetes.

I am anemic, can I still get the COVID vaccine?

People with anemia can receive the COVID-19 vaccines.

Should those with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome receive the vaccine?

CDC and FDA recommend that the mRNA COVID vaccines can be given to people who have underlying medical conditions including immunocompromised persons and persons with autoimmune conditions. However, there are currently no specific data regarding the side effects of the vaccine for people with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Is it safe to receive the vaccination if I am on medication?

Employees will be screened and counseled before receiving the vaccine. All personal medical questions can be asked during this screening process.

I have been taking antibiotics, is it safe for me to get vaccinated?

A person can get vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine if they are taking antibiotics or just completed a course of antibiotics.

I take prednisone, is it safe to get the vaccine?

People receiving immunosuppressive therapy, such as prednisone, can receive the COVID-19 vaccines, but the CDC does advise that such individuals may have a less robust immune response.

Are there any long or short term effects of vaccine for people with asthma?

The FDA specifically wanted the participants in the COVID-19 vaccine trials to be diverse. Thus,

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both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials were designed to increase the number of persons from racial and ethnic minorities, as well as those with medical conditions (e.g., chronic lung disease, cardiac disease, severe obesity, diabetes, HIV, etc.) that placed them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease. 21-22% of participants had the medical conditions as above, and approximately 5-8% of participants (several thousand) had lung disease including asthma. The vaccine safety (side effects/reactions) and efficacy were similar in all of these subgroups.

Are there any updates to the safety of the Covid-19 vaccine regarding the following:

- 1. Hypercoagulable patients.**
- 2. Patients who are on anticoagulants such as warfarin.**
- 3. Autoimmune individuals.**
- 4. Current smokers or those with COPD.**

Based on CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and other national guidelines, there are no current contraindications against people with any of these conditions (hypercoagulability, receiving anticoagulation therapy, autoimmune conditions, asthma, smoking, or COPD) receiving the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Data for people with autoimmune disease are currently limited, but the CDC's ACIP currently recommends offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people with autoimmune disease. CDC also recommends counseling people with autoimmune disease about the lack of data and the potential for lower vaccine effectiveness due to a reduced immune response. Smoking and chronic lung disease are both known risk factors for more severe illness from COVID-19, and therefore participants with those conditions were intentionally recruited for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials. The vaccine safety (side effects/reactions) and efficacy were similar in these subgroups.

COVID-19 Vaccine for Women Pregnant or Breastfeeding

I wanted to know if there are any ongoing studies that I can participate in pertaining to pregnancy and the COVID vaccine? I would like to be a part of any ongoing research if there is an opportunity.

Thank you for your interest. While there is not currently a vaccine study enrolling pregnant women, there are plans to do so. However, pregnant women who have received the COVID-19 vaccine are encouraged to enroll in the CDC's V-safe program: <https://vsafe.cdc.gov>.

I am planning to become pregnant, currently pregnant, or breastfeeding. Is it safe for me to receive the vaccine?

Experts from the CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) and from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) have issued guidance for the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnant and breastfeeding individuals. Both ACOG and ACIP recommend that pregnant individuals who meet vaccination criteria based on CDC's recommended priority groups for vaccination, which currently include health care personnel, may choose to be vaccinated. For lactating (breastfeeding) individuals, ACOG recommends that may be offered the vaccine similar to non-lactating individuals.

[Click here](#) to see Dr. Forese and Dr. Laura Riley discuss the COVID-19 vaccine for women pregnant or breastfeeding.

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A lot of the briefings have addressed pregnant women or women that are breastfeeding, but would getting the vaccine affect one's fertility? Due to the fact that they didn't get to this stage in the trials, how can we be sure that this won't affect one's fertility? What should people planning on getting pregnant do?

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends vaccination of individuals who are actively trying to become pregnant or are contemplating pregnancy and meet the current criteria for vaccination based on CDC's ACIP prioritization recommendations. Additionally, it is not necessary to delay pregnancy after completing both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Given the mechanism of action and the safety profile of the vaccine in non-pregnant individuals, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are not thought to cause an increased risk of infertility in men or women. These vaccines are not live virus vaccines, nor do they use an adjuvant to enhance vaccine efficacy. These vaccines do not enter the nucleus and do not alter human DNA. As a result, mRNA vaccines cannot cause any genetic changes. The mRNA also degrades quickly and is gone from your body in a matter of days.

The WHO came out with a statement that they are not recommending the Moderna vaccine for pregnant women. Is there any update from NYP on this issue? Is there a way to guarantee Pfizer for pregnant women?

There is no change in CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), both of which continue to recommend that pregnant individuals who meet vaccination criteria based on CDC's recommended priority groups for vaccination, including health care personnel, may choose to be vaccinated. ACOG and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) released a statement on January 27 in response to the WHO statement that their recommendations are unchanged as above. Finally, on January 29, **WHO has now revised their statement** to say that while current data are limited on vaccine safety in pregnant women, based on what we know about this kind of vaccine, there is no reason to believe there will be specific risks that would outweigh the benefits of vaccination for pregnant women. WHO makes the same recommendation for both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines: those pregnant women at high risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (e.g., **health care workers**) or who have comorbidities which add to their risk of severe disease, may be vaccinated in consultation with their health care provider.

What to Expect After Vaccination: Reactions, Future COVID Testing, and Continuing COVID-19 Safety Measures

I'm hearing about some people who experienced chills and fever after the second vaccination dose. Should we take Tylenol or Advil or should we not take anything? Also, should we take it prophylactically before we even have symptoms?

Reactions after either the first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine are well described. They are usually mild-to-moderate, last a short time, and are evidence that your body is mounting an immune response. These reactions, such as headache, body aches, and less commonly chills and fever can be treated with Tylenol and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). However, CDC does not recommend taking these medications prophylactically because of the theoretic possibility they could dampen the immune response. For anyone

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having symptoms, they should contact the WHS Hotline 646-697-9470, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., weekends 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Eight hours after receiving the vaccine, I had chills, muscle aches, headaches, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. I was fine after 24 hours. Should I expect my second dose to be worse?

The reactions you had and their limited duration are well described following the COVID-19 vaccine and are evidence that your body is mounting an immune response. It is unpredictable if you will have the same reactions following the second dose. Reactions after the second dose are still described as mild to moderate, last a short time and respond to Tylenol and to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

I experienced body aches, chill, and congestion after getting COVID vaccine. How long these symptoms normally will last? I have to be out of work due to these symptoms, how do I use Support Care Time?

Reactions after COVID-19 vaccine are well described. The most common reaction is pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site. Some people experience fatigue, muscle or joint pain, headache, chills and less commonly fever. Reactions generally last a short time and will respond to Tylenol or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Thus, the body aches and chills you describe are consistent with the described reactions. However, congestion is not a reaction to the vaccine. Please access the NYP/UNUM COVID Tracker tool (nypcovidtracker.com) to report if you are experiencing symptoms. Your manager would be able to inform you about the use of your Support Care Time bank. If you have questions regarding your symptoms, contact the WHS Hotline at 646-697-9470, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and weekends 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Will there be post-vaccination antibody testing offered to assess immune response?

Post-vaccination antibody testing for SARS-CoV-2 is not recommended by the CDC to assess immune response. This is because the correlation between immunity and detection of antibodies is not entirely clear yet. In addition, T cells play a role in immunity after vaccination.

Please note that many serology tests, including the ones currently offered by the NYP, Columbia and Weill Cornell clinical laboratories, do not test for antibodies against the spike protein so such tests would not be able to measure an antibody response to the vaccine.

I am scheduled for a COVID-19 test as a pre-op for surgery next week. If I receive the vaccine now, will that affect the test results?

The vaccine will NOT affect your pre-operative testing results for SARS-CoV-2. People who are vaccinated will still require pre-operative testing for SARS-CoV-2.

I am scheduled for a procedure after I receive the second dose of the vaccine. Will pre-procedure COVID-19 testing still be required?

At this time, there are no changes to recommendations regarding testing for SARS-Cov-2, including prior to procedures. Until more data are available regarding vaccine effectiveness in the real-world setting, all testing requirements as well as safety precautions (i.e., wearing a

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mask when around others, practicing social distancing, wearing all appropriate PPE in the hospital, and performing frequent hand hygiene) will remain in place.

Will I still need to wear a mask after I get my COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, at least for a time. During the vaccine rollout it is still essential to follow CDC recommendations and use all available tools to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including masks and social distancing. As more people are vaccinated and as case counts go down, some of these requirements may change.

If a person receives both doses of the vaccine and it is proven to be effective, why do they need to continue wearing a mask?

Until national guidelines change, after COVID-19 vaccination, people should continue all COVID-safe practices including wearing a mask, wearing appropriate PPE, practicing social distancing, and performing frequent hand hygiene. This is because while the vaccine is highly effective (~95%) in preventing COVID-19 illness, it is not 100% effective, and because we still don't know how long people will be protected after vaccination. It also has not yet been studied how well the vaccine prevents vaccinated individuals from passing on the virus to other people.

Following vaccination, if someone is exposed to COVID should they still quarantine?

Yes, at this time, there has been no change from the current practice if someone is exposed.

Once we receive both doses of the vaccine, is a PCR swab within 24 hours of return to New York from a non-contiguous state still required?

Yes, after travel from a non-contiguous state, vaccinated health care personnel will need to have a PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 within 24 hours of their return and again at the fourth day after their return.

How long does this vaccine remain effective? Will we be getting booster shots too, if/when this first round runs its course?

We do not yet know how long immunity lasts after the two-dose vaccination or if a booster will be needed in the future. Current data include clinical trial participants who have been followed for at least two months, but these trials are ongoing and more data will be available in the future.

If after vaccination one gets sick, will Support Care Time be used or the employee's sick time benefit?

If you have reported symptoms related to the vaccine through the NYP/UNUM COVID Tracker Tool (<https://nypcovidtracker.com>), and you are eligible for Support Care Time, you would be able to use it. Your manager can explain the process.

Variant Strains of SARS-CoV-2

What makes the new COVID strains more contagious? Are they spread differently?

According to CDC, viruses constantly change through mutations, and new variants of a virus are expected over time. Multiple variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been documented throughout the pandemic around the world, including variants first identified in the United

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Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil. These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, We don't yet understand why these new variants could be more transmissible as their virologic, epidemiologic, and clinical characteristics are still being studied. Based upon available information, it appears that the same infection prevention measures we've been using are effective for these variants, including masking, social distancing, use of PPE, and frequent hand hygiene. As more information becomes available on these new variant strains, it will be communicated.

Do the current Pfizer and Moderna vaccines protect against the variant strains?

So far, studies suggest that antibodies generated through vaccination with currently authorized vaccines recognize these variants. This is being closely investigated and more studies are underway.. FDA-authorized vaccines are “polyclonal,” producing antibodies that target several parts of the spike protein. The virus would likely need to accumulate multiple mutations in the spike protein to evade immunity induced by vaccines or by natural infection. Therefore, the recommendation is to proceed with getting vaccinated with the current FDA-authorized vaccines.

Staff mentioned that they heard the Pfizer vaccine covers the variant strains but not Moderna, does this mean they do not have the same protection as those who got the Pfizer vaccine?

So far, studies suggest that antibodies generated through vaccination with all currently authorized vaccines (including both Pfizer and Moderna) recognize these variants. This is being closely investigated and more studies are underway. FDA-authorized vaccines are “polyclonal,” producing antibodies that target several parts of the spike protein. Therefore, the recommendation is to proceed with getting vaccinated with the current FDA-authorized vaccines, including both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

References

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Guidance for Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19: <https://www.acog.org/en/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-Pregnant-and-Lactating-Patients-Against-COVID-19>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance on the Importance of COVID-19 Vaccination for Healthcare Personnel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/hcp.html>