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# Understanding the Vaccine Eligibility Guidance

## Who is eligible to receive the vaccine now?

As of April 5, 2021, all Kentuckians age 16 and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for individuals age 16 and older and the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (please see statement re: pause below) vaccines are approved for individuals age 18 and older.

Parents or legal guardians of Kentuckians ages 16- to 17- years old can find vaccination sites administering the Pfizer vaccine on the [Kentucky COVID Vaccination Locations Map](#). Each vaccination site on the map lists if Kentuckians ages 16 to 17 can receive a vaccine at that location. Kentuckians ages 16- to 17- years-old cannot schedule vaccine appointments for themselves; a parent or legal guardian must schedule an appointment for them.

Johnson & Johnson Pause: As of April 13, 2021, the Kentucky Department for Public Health is following FDA and CDC guidance and recommendations to pause Johnson & Johnson vaccinations in Kentucky until further notice. KDPH and Local Health Departments are working to provide Pfizer or Moderna vaccines for persons with previously scheduled appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Individuals who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks of vaccination should contact their health care providers. For more information, read [Kentucky's Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine notice](#).

**How are underserved geographic areas being addressed? In some areas, there is a lot of distance between where the caller is and available locations. Callers complain about driving to far-away locations.**

Kentucky is employing both regional vaccine sites and local community sites in its vaccine distribution plan. Our goal, when the vaccine supply has grown large enough to accommodate it, is to ensure that persons drive no more than one county away to receive their vaccine. We are also exploring ways to get the vaccines to persons who cannot travel.

Public transit agencies across the Commonwealth are providing free or reduced-cost transportation to vaccine appointments for Kentuckians in more than 90 counties. You can find the full list of transportation options on [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov).

With the recent Emergency Use Authorization of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine, Kentuckians will only need to drive once to receive their vaccine. In the future, Kentucky vaccine providers may be able to provide more mobile vaccination options for those who are homebound.

**Can out-of-state persons get their vaccinations in Kentucky?**

Yes. As of April 19, 2021, vaccination sites in Kentucky are not required to verify an individual's Kentucky residency status to administer a COVID-19 vaccine.

## **I own a business. Can my facility serve as a vaccination site to my employees?**

At this time, Kentucky's approach is for individuals rather than employers to make COVID-19 vaccination appointments. As of April 5, 2021, all individuals age 16 and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Kentucky.

The complexities of vaccine handling, ordering, second-dose matching, and shipment, as well as the need to ensure equitable access, represent significant challenges for the Kentucky Department for Public Health in selecting vaccination sites. Still, Kentucky now has more than 570 sites across the Commonwealth.

# **Understanding How the COVID-19 Vaccines Work**

## **The Science behind the COVID-19 Vaccines**

### **What are antibodies?**

Antibodies are proteins made in response to infections. Antibodies are detected in the blood of people who are tested after an infection. Antibodies show the body's efforts to fight off the infection. Antibodies usually start to develop within 1 to 3 weeks after infection.

### **What is a vaccine?**

Vaccines expose the body to fragments of a virus so the body's immune system is trained to produce protective antibodies much like it would if you were exposed to the disease. Vaccines, though, only use small pieces of the virus or otherwise stimulate our bodies to produce small pieces of the virus that produce protective antibodies but are incapable of causing infection. After being vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease without actually getting sick with the disease itself.

This is what makes vaccines such powerful medicine. Unlike most medicines, which treat or cure diseases, vaccines prevent them.

### **What is mRNA?**

Messenger RNA vaccines, also known as mRNA vaccines, are some of the first COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the United States. mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine to help protect against infectious diseases. mRNA vaccines do NOT involve a weakened or inactivated germ into or bodies. Instead, they teach our cells how to make a protein – or even a piece of a protein – that triggers an immune response in our bodies. This immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

### **Can mRNA vaccines change the DNA of a person?**

No, mRNA is active only in a cell's cytoplasm and DNA is located in the nucleus; mRNA vaccines do not operate in the same cellular compartment that DNA is located and therefore are not able to change DNA.

### **What is an adenovirus? Will it make me sick?**

An adenovirus is a type of virus that causes symptoms like the common cold. It is used in vaccines as a vehicle to deliver instructions to cells about how to fight the virus. When injected into the arm, the adenovirus vaccines cannot cause illness, but it does create antibodies.

### **What is the difference between a mutation and a strain?**

A mutation refers to actual changes in the genomic sequence of the virus. Genomes that differ in sequence are often called variants, a term which is somewhat less precise. Two variants can differ by one mutation or by many. There are thousands of variants but not all need to be studied or followed. There are Variants of Interest or Variants Under Investigation, abbreviated as VOI. There are also Variants of Concern, or VOC. Variants of Concern are those that have characteristics brought about by mutations that cause them to act differently than the parent virus, such as not being inhibited by vaccination, or reducing the effectiveness of treatments. A strain, therefore, is a variant that “behaves” differently than its parent virus, so the VOC’s would be considered different strains of COVID-19. Variants of interest are still being studied to determine if their genomic mutations are sufficient to produce effects of the virus different from the original virus.

### **What is B.1.1.7?**

The B.1.1.7 variant, first identified in Britain, is now the source of most new coronavirus infections in the United States, according to the CDC. B.1.1.7 is the first variant to come to widespread attention. The CDC has also been tracking the spread of other variants, such as B.1.351, first found in South Africa, and P.1, which was first identified in Brazil.

### **How effective are the vaccines against the new, more contagious strains of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19?**

Scientists are working to learn more about these variants to better understand how easily they might be transmitted and the effectiveness of currently-authorized vaccines against them. Early data shows that the first two vaccines may not be as effective but still provide very good protection from severe COVID-19 disease and that makes them definitely worth getting.

The Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine was studied in a clinical trial in South Africa, where a COVID-19 variant is circulating. In this trial, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was found to be 64% effective in preventing moderate to severe infection.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine be an annual shot?**

We do not know yet. Scientists are still studying this and will determine this once the vaccine is distributed and more data becomes available.

### **How many people need to receive the COVID-19 vaccine before we achieve herd immunity?**

Experts estimate at least 70-80% of Americans would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity

to COVID-19. Herd immunity is a term used to describe when enough people have protection—either from previous infection or vaccination—that it is unlikely that a virus or bacteria can effectively spread and cause disease. As a result, everyone within the community is protected even if some people do not have any protection themselves. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease.

### **Will there be enough COVID-19 vaccines for everyone?**

COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing and production has sped up, meaning more Kentuckians can find a COVID-19 vaccine than earlier in 2021. Kentuckians looking to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment can find vaccination sites with available appointments on the [Current Vaccine Openings listing on kyCovid19.ky.gov](https://www.ky.gov/covid19/vaccine).

### **How long will COVID-19 vaccine immunity last?**

We do not yet know how long immunity lasts after infection or vaccination:

- **Infection:** Scientists are working to learn more about immunity following infection. While some people have been re-infected after recovering from COVID-19, the number of people who have experienced this is very small compared to the total number of people who have been infected. Likewise, although the virus has been changing since it was first recognized, antibodies from people who were sick early during the pandemic are still effective against the slightly modified version. For these reasons, scientists are hopeful that people will be protected for one or more years.
- **Vaccination:** Clinical trial participants will be monitored to understand how long immunity lasts after vaccination.

### **I have heard the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is less effective than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Is this true?**

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is just as effective in preventing COVID-19 related hospitalizations and deaths as the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. In clinical trials, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was found to be very highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and death, highly effective at preventing severe disease, and highly effective at preventing moderate to severe disease in the United States.

## **Second Doses**

### **How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?**

The mRNA vaccines require two doses. For the Pfizer vaccine, doses should be separated by 3 weeks. For Moderna's vaccine, doses should be separated by 28 days. The two mRNA vaccines are not interchangeable per the United States Food and Drug Administration. A person should be sure they know which one they received for the first dose and be clear about when they should return for the second dose, particularly because the vaccines require both doses to have maximum protection. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires a single dose.

### **What if I miss my second dose?**

It is important that you receive your second dose. The COVID-19 vaccines that require two doses are not completely effective unless you receive the second dose. You should ask to schedule your second dose at the time you receive your initial dose. If you miss your second dose, reach out to the provider for recommendation of next steps.

According to the CDC, the second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible. 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 (42 days) after the first dose.

### **I got my first dose of the vaccine in another state (or country) and cannot return there for my second dose. How can I get my second dose in Kentucky?**

If you received your first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine outside of the Kentucky border and are unable to return for the second dose, you should contact the vaccination site to let them know you only need your second dose when scheduling your appointment. Vaccination sites across the Commonwealth are instructed to accommodate second-dose only appointments as they are able to. If you schedule an appointment for your second dose only, make sure to bring your photo ID and COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card.

### **I received my first dose while a patient at a long-term care facility and missed my second dose. Where do I go for help scheduling my second dose?**

Persons who received their first dose through the federal LTCF vaccine program should contact the vaccination site to let them know you only need your second dose when scheduling your appointment. Vaccination sites across the Commonwealth are instructed to accommodate second-dose only appointments as they are able to. If you schedule an appointment for your second dose only, make sure to bring your photo ID and COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card.

### **What if I get COVID-19 between my first and second dose of the vaccine?**

If you came down with COVID-19 after getting the first dose of your vaccine but before receiving your second dose, or booster shot, you should wait to get the second dose until after your symptoms have subsided and you have completed the 10-day required isolation period since the symptoms began.

NOTE: For those persons who previously received passive antibody therapy (e.g., Regeneron, Eli Lilly antibody therapy, monoclonal antibodies) for COVID-19: Vaccination should be deferred for at least 90 days afterward.

## **Vaccination for Children Under Age 18**

### **Are the COVID-19 vaccines being studied to use on children?**

Yes. Studies of COVID-19 vaccines in children have started. The Pfizer mRNA vaccine was tested in some

16- to 18-year-olds and is approved for teens ages 16- to 18-year old. Recently, Pfizer and Moderna have started testing their COVID-19 vaccines in children and results of those studies should be published later in 2021. As more information becomes available in younger children and teens, the age-related recommendations will be adjusted.

It is important that COVID-19 vaccines are thoroughly tested in children and adolescents younger than 18 years to ensure safety in this younger population whose bodies are still rapidly developing and therefore differ from fully matured adults. This is a normal part of the vaccine development process and most vaccines are tested with adults first.

### **Can my children get vaccinated at the same time that I do?**

No, not if your children are under the age of 16. The COVID-19 vaccines are not currently authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration to be used in any person under the age of 16. Additionally, healthy children, adolescents, and young adults are at the lowest risk of severe COVID-19 disease and are therefore placed in later phases of vaccine deployment.

Parents or legal guardians of Kentuckians ages 16- to 17- years-old can find vaccination sites administering the Pfizer vaccine on the [Kentucky COVID Vaccination Locations Map](#). Each vaccination site on the map lists if Kentuckians ages 16 to 17 can receive a vaccine there. Kentuckians ages 16- to 17- years old cannot schedule vaccine appointments for themselves; a parent or legal guardian must schedule an appointment for them.

#### Supplemental Responses:

**Pfizer:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to permit the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for active immunization to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older.

**Moderna:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to permit the emergency use of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine for active immunization to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older.

**Johnson & Johnson:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to permit the emergency use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine for active immunization to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older. However, administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is currently paused.

# Preparing for Vaccination

## Costs and Insurance

### **How much does the COVID-19 vaccine cost?**

The vaccines are free to everyone, regardless of whether they have private or government insurance or no insurance at all. The federal government bought the vaccines from the manufacturers, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson, and is providing them to states and pharmacies to distribute at no cost. If you do have insurance, the vaccination site coordinators where you register will probably want you to bring your card along when you get vaccinated. That's because while the government paid for the vaccine, it hasn't necessarily paid to get it into people's arms. Storing and handling the vaccine, keeping records and running the sites and vaccine clinics, etc. costs money, mostly to pay staff who would ordinarily be doing something else.

### **Are organizations that administer the COVID-19 vaccine allowed to bill your insurance company for an administration fee?**

The federal government is purchasing the COVID-19 vaccine for U.S residents. Vaccine sites are permitted to bill Medicare, Medicaid, or other health insurance plans to recover the cost of administering the vaccine, but the federal government has required that patients incur no out-of-pocket cost for either getting the shot or for the vaccine itself.

### **If I am vaccinated during the course of a medical appointment for other purposes, might I be responsible for an office visit fee?**

Yes, based on your health insurance coverage, you may have an out-of-pocket cost for a medical office visit. But the federal government has required that patients incur no out-of-pocket cost for the vaccine or its administration.

### **Do you need to have insurance to get the COVID-19 vaccine? If you do not, how much will the vaccine cost per dose?**

Vaccine purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. Your insurance may be billed for an office visit or administration fee, but you cannot be turned away from receiving the vaccine due to lack of insurance or payment. You do not need to show proof of insurance to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **What kind of documentation should I bring to my vaccine appointment?**

- Photo ID to verify name and age. This includes school IDs, passports, employee badges, expired IDs, and foreign IDs.
- Health insurance information, if you have it



You are not required to provide social security number, home address, or U.S. citizenship status. You cannot be turned away for not having a social security number or health insurance. If you are asked for your Social Security number, banking information, passwords, or other sensitive information, please report it to the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-804-7556.

## Understanding the Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines

### Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. For all vaccines in the United States, there is an extensive development and approval process, and no safety steps were skipped during the development of these vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines are held to the same standards as other vaccines to make sure they are safe. Additionally, active monitoring continues, as is the case for all immunizations, to ensure ongoing safety.

### What steps are taken to ensure safety after a vaccine is approved?

After a vaccine is approved and distributed, vaccine monitoring systems are used to watch for possible side effects. If an unexpected side effect is seen, experts study it to determine whether changes are needed in vaccine recommendations. The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is a national vaccine safety surveillance program of the FDA and CDC. VAERS collects and analyzes information from reports of adverse events (e.g., side effects) that occur after a vaccine has been approved and distributed. Anyone can submit a report to VAERS at [vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html](https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html).

There is also a new smartphone app recently introduced for the COVID-19 vaccines. **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 the 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. To learn more, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html).

### Can mRNA vaccines change the DNA of a person?

No, mRNA is active only in a cell's cytoplasm and DNA is located in the nucleus; mRNA vaccines do not operate in the same cellular compartment that DNA is located and therefore are not able to change DNA.

### Were steps skipped to provide COVID-19 vaccines faster?

Even though the COVID-19 vaccines were developed quicker than has ever been done in the past, the speed did not decrease safety. The steps that were shortened were accomplished by the federal government removing financial risk from vaccine manufacturers so they could proceed with multiple steps at the same time instead of doing them one at a time.

### **Do the COVID-19 vaccines contain a microchip?**

There are rumors that the vaccine contains radio-frequency identification tags to track people. This is not true, and there is no evidence that any of the COVID-19 vaccines contain a microchip.

### **What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?**

You are considered fully vaccinated 15 days after you have received your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or 15 days after you received your single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

## **Side Effects, Allergies, and Underlying Health Conditions**

### **What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The side effects will vary slightly from person to person and depending on which vaccine you receive. Most reported side effects are consistent with other vaccines. For example, vaccine injections may cause mild flu-like side effects — including pain or swelling at the injection site, a headache, chills, tiredness or fever are common. Side effects should go away in a few days, but if you have side effect concerns or they persist, please contact your healthcare provider.

These symptoms do not mean you have been infected with COVID-19, but they do indicate your immune system has begun working to make the cells and proteins necessary to protect you from severe illness if you are exposed to COVID-19.

### **What if I am concerned about my side effects?**

If you experience severe side effects, please seek medical attention immediately. If you would like to report your side effects to the federal reporting system, please visit [vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html](https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html)

### **If I cannot take a flu shot due to an egg allergy, can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine (either Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson)?**

The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are cell-based vaccines. Since they are not grown in eggs like some flu vaccines, you should be safe. However, if you have experienced an allergic reaction to any prior vaccine or injectable medication other than a rash, you should discuss it your health care provider first and receive the vaccine in a setting that is prepared for medical intervention (doctor's office, etc.).

### **Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No, it is not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines. To trigger an immune response, some vaccines for other diseases put a weakened or inactivated virus into our bodies. This does not happen with Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines for COVID-19. 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 being infected if the real virus enters our bodies. Because you may still be able to spread COVID-19, however, the Kentucky Department of Public Health recommends that you still cover your mouth and nose with a mask, wash your hands often, and stay at

least 6 feet away from others when in public or around unvaccinated adults.

### **Will COVID-19 vaccines cause me to test positive on COVID-19 tests?**

No. These vaccines will not cause you to test positive on viral tests.

### **Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or currently breastfeeding?**

Persons who are pregnant are encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to them. A recent study shows that pregnant and lactating women who received a COVID-19 vaccine can pass protective antibodies to their baby. mRNA vaccines are not considered live virus vaccines and are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. We recommend pregnant or breastfeeding women seek guidance from their health care provider regarding your specific medical situation. For more information, go to <https://www.acog.org/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-and-pregnancy-conversation-guide-for-clinicians>.

### **If I have an autoimmune or immune-compromising condition, can I be vaccinated for COVID-19?**

People with immune-compromising conditions may get the COVID-19 vaccine as long as they are not in one of the following categories:

- Severe allergy to a vaccine component (i.e., one that causes anaphylaxis or requires medical intervention)
- History of severe allergy to any vaccine or injectable medication

***However, it is recommended that individuals with compromised immune systems discuss their personal risks and benefits with a health care provider to determine whether to receive the vaccine.***

Data about how well the vaccine works and its safety in immune-compromised individuals are not currently available, so it is possible that these individuals could have a lower immune response to vaccination. On the other hand, persons with these conditions may also be at higher risk of severe disease due to COVID-19. Therefore, the CDC recommended that people who are immune-compromised or taking immunosuppressive medications could receive the vaccine if they wanted as long as they do not have other contraindications.

If someone with an immune-compromising condition decides to get vaccinated, it will be particularly important for them to receive both doses and practice other public health measures until more is known about their protection against COVID-19. Post-licensure monitoring systems, like the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) and the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD), will allow for real-time monitoring of these sub-groups.

If you experience severe side effects, please seek medical attention immediately. If you would like to report your side effects to the federal reporting system, please visit [vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html](https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html).

## Recipient Fact Sheets

Moderna: [modernatx.com/covid19vaccine-eua/eua-fact-sheet-recipients.pdf](https://modernatx.com/covid19vaccine-eua/eua-fact-sheet-recipients.pdf)

Pfizer: [labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=14472&format=pdf](https://labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=14472&format=pdf)

Johnson & Johnson: [fda.gov/media/146305/download](https://fda.gov/media/146305/download)

### **Will I be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?**

If possible, people should separate their COVID-19 vaccinations by at least 14 days from any other vaccine (before or after). This recommendation is based on the fact that we currently do not have data regarding whether the COVID-19 vaccines will affect, or be affected by, other vaccines.

Studies to determine whether COVID-19 vaccines can be given with the flu vaccine or the shingles vaccine will be completed; these types of studies are called “concomitant use studies.”

### **If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, will I still need a vaccine?**

Vaccination should be offered to persons regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection.

Vaccination of persons with known current COVID-19 infection should be postponed until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) and criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation.

Additionally, while there is no recommended minimum interval between infection and vaccination, current evidence suggests that reinfection is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. Thus, persons with documented acute COVID-19 infection in the preceding 90 days may delay vaccination until near the end of this period, if desired.

NOTE: For those persons who previously received passive antibody therapy (e.g., Regeneron, Eli Lilly antibody therapy, monoclonal antibodies) for COVID-19: Vaccination should be deferred for at least 90 days afterward.

### **I have specific medical or health conditions that concern me about this vaccine, or about how this vaccine is administered (in the arm)? Should I still get the vaccine?**

Persons with concerns about the vaccine or how it is administered, given their specific health conditions, should consult with their health care provider, who should have the best understanding of their individual health issues.

### **Should I delay getting the vaccine if I have scheduled surgery under general anesthesia?**

We recommend that you consult with your health care provider, surgeon, and/or anesthesiologist for an individual response to this type of question. You also may want to contact the vaccine manufacturer’s hotline.

Moderna: 866-663-3762

Pfizer: 877-829-2419

Johnson & Johnson: 800-565-4008

## Following Public Health Guidance After Vaccination

### Will I still have to wear a mask and social distance after I've received both doses of the vaccine?

If you have been fully vaccinated, meaning it has been 15 days since you received your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or 15 days since you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you can gather indoors with other fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask. Effective Feb. 2, 2021, masks are required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

It is clear the vaccines prevent serious illness, but we don't know yet if they will prevent vaccinated people from picking up the virus and spreading it to others. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change recommendations on steps everyone should take to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities will also affect this decision.

### Once I have been vaccinated, can I ignore any lockdown restrictions?

If you have been fully vaccinated, meaning it has been 15 days since your last dose, you may:

- Gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask
- Gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19
- Forgo quarantine and COVID-19 testing if you've been around someone who has COVID-19
  - If you live in a group setting (such as a correctional facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay from others and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

If you have been fully vaccinated, you should still:

- Wear a mask and socially distance when you are in public, gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one other household, or visiting an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19
- Avoid medium or large-sized gatherings
- Watch out for symptoms of COVID-19

Everyone will still need to practice recommended public health measures for a while because it will take time to slow or stop the spread of the virus. The vaccines have a high efficacy rate around 95%, but they do not have a 100% efficacy. Two other factors are important for understanding why:

### If I've been vaccinated, but then exposed to COVID-19, do I still need to quarantine?

If you have been fully vaccinated, meaning it has been 15 days since your last dose, you may refrain from quarantine and testing if you are asymptomatic after being around someone who has COVID-19.

### **How will residents show they have been vaccinated for COVID-19?**

Vaccinated individuals will receive a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or printout that documents which COVID-19 vaccine they received and the date they received it. Vaccination providers will also keep a record of vaccination in the providers' Electronic Health Records (EHR) and/or in the Kentucky Immunization Registry.

After you receive your first dose of any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines, you should take a picture or make a copy of your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. If you received the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, you should also take a picture or make a copy of your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card after your second dose.

There are several free opportunities around the United States to laminate your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. **You should not laminate your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card until after you complete the full COVID-19 vaccination series; after your first dose for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and after your second dose for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.**

### **Are we going to be required to take the COVID-19 vaccine?**

There is no state or federal government requirement for any person to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Will children be allowed to attend school if those in the household have not received the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The Kentucky Department for Public Health, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education, will collaborate to determine and communicate school-related recommendations for vaccines. There is no federal or state requirement to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and this is unlikely to change. There is also no recommendation or guidance that would prevent children from attending school if others in their household are not vaccinated.

### **What if teachers or administrators at my child's school have refused the vaccine? How will my child be protected?**

Healthy children, adolescents, and young adults are at the lowest risk of severe COVID-19 disease. In general, the CDC recommends that children ages two and older should wear a mask. Masks offer some protection to the wearer and those around him or her. However, the CDC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some children, such as children with certain disabilities, including cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory, and behavioral disorders. Visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/) to learn more.

### **Can residents travel by plane if they haven't received the COVID-19 vaccine once it is publicly available?**

There are no current requirements to be vaccinated to engage in air travel or any other specified activity. On April 2, 2021, the CDC recommended that fully vaccinated people can travel at low risk to themselves.

As of February 1, 2021, the CDC requires masks to be worn when flying or traveling on public transportation, as well as in airports and bus stations or other public transportation hubs. If you are planning on traveling in the near future, you should refer to the airline or other relevant entity's policies to ensure that you understand current guidance and requirements.

### **Can I visit someone who is a resident of a long-term care facility?**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued new long-term care facility visitation guidance on March 10, 2021. As more and more people get vaccinated, long-term care facilities should allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents regardless of vaccination status. Limited indoor visitation is recommended for:

- Unvaccinated residents, if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is greater than 10% and <70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated
- Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions
- Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine

Outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Outdoor visits pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow.

### **Are two masks better than one, especially given the new, more contagious strains that have arrived in Kentucky?**

The best advice is to follow the public health guidance to wear a single close-fitting mask, wash your hands frequently, maintain six feet of distance between yourself and others who aren't members of your household, and stay home as much as possible. Generally, those who follow this advice gain little benefit from wearing a second mask. For persons who must work in confined spaces for extended periods of time with other persons who are not members of their own households, wearing two masks or a single, 3-layer mask may provide some additional protection.

## **Scheduling a Vaccine Appointment**

### **What is Kentucky's plan for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine?**

National and state COVID-19 vaccine deployment is rapidly evolving and expanding. As is the case in all other states, Kentucky is distributing the COVID-19 vaccine in phases with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable members of society as quickly as possible. Also, to reach the most people possible as quickly as possible, Kentucky is committed to making the vaccine available to all willing Kentuckians as quickly and efficiently as vaccine quantities allow. The [kycovid19.ky.gov](https://www.ky.gov/covid19) website provides the most up-to-date information related to vaccines, Kentucky's distribution plan, and the vaccine phases.

**Given the opening of regional vaccine distribution sites, what is the plan for getting vaccines to rural counties and individuals who are either homebound or cannot travel to regional sites?**

Regional vaccine distribution sites represent one part of Kentucky’s strategy for ensuring that everyone who is currently eligible for a vaccine is able to get one as quickly as possible. We are building a large network of these high-capacity sites that will grow as the supply of vaccine grows to allow for efficient vaccinations in walk-in, and in the future, drive-through sites. But our strategy also includes continuing to work with local health departments and other community sites that support public health efforts in every county.

Both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines require careful handling and should not be transported once the vials are pierced. Each vial contains multiple vaccine doses, so that instability makes single doses in individual households problematic. We are working on ways to resolve this issue, including incorporating use of a more stable vaccine in the near future.

The Johnson & Johnson is an adenovirus-based vaccine and is less delicate than the mRNA vaccines, making it a more mobile vaccine. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has fewer storage and transportation requirements than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which makes it a good option to improve equitable access to the vaccine.

**I heard that [name of a specific provider or company] is providing vaccines in Kentucky. Will you give me the number I should call or the website I should check to schedule an appointment?**

A comprehensive list of sites that are administering the COVID-19 vaccine to the general public can be found at [vaccinemap.ky.gov](https://vaccinemap.ky.gov).

**When will the general population have access to the COVID-19 vaccine? How many Kentucky residents are in each phase?**

As of April 5, 2021, all Kentuckians age 16 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Kentuckians looking to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment can find vaccination sites at [vaccinemap.ky.gov](https://vaccinemap.ky.gov). A regularly-updated list of vaccine sites with available appointments is available on the [Current Vaccine Openings listing on kyccovid19.ky.gov](https://kycovid19.ky.gov).

**If I signed up for notifications on vaccine.ky.gov or by calling the Find-A-Vaccine hotline at 855-598-2246, do I still need to schedule an appointment, or will I be contacted when it's my turn?**

The Find-A-Vaccine notification system is intended to alert you when your COVID-19 vaccine phase is eligible to schedule a vaccination appointment but does not schedule the appointments for you. The system also may alert you when more appointments open up at sites near you or provide other useful information. For scheduling opportunities and locations visit [vaccinemap.ky.gov](https://vaccinemap.ky.gov). Or, you may call our Find-A-Vaccine hotline at 855-598-2246 (TTY for those who are deaf or hard of hearing only: 855-326-4654) for assistance in identifying locations near you and how to reach them.



### **If it is not my turn to get the COVID-19 vaccine, will I be turned away at vaccination sites?**

As of April 5, 2021, all Kentuckians age 16 and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. If you believe you have been unduly turned away at a vaccination site, please contact the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-804-7556.

### **What is the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program?**

The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination is a collaboration between the federal government, states, and territories, and 21 national pharmacy partners (Walgreen's for Kentucky), as well as independent pharmacy networks (Good Neighbor in Kentucky) to increase access to COVID-19 vaccine across the country.

In the early stages of the program, a limited number of these retail pharmacies are receiving COVID-19 vaccine supply directly from the federal government to vaccinate priority groups.

### **How will residents be notified when it is their turn to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

We understand many Kentuckians are eager to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. We recently announced the Find-A-Vaccine website ([vaccine.ky.gov](http://vaccine.ky.gov)) and hotline (855-598-2246; for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, the TTY number is 855-326-4654). The Find-A-Vaccine website takes visitors through a survey to determine if they are in a Phase that currently is eligible for the vaccine. If so, they will be able to view a map of locations and a drop-down menu of contact information for sites currently administering vaccines. If not, they will be able to sign up for notifications, via email or text, regarding a change in their eligibility status and other vaccine updates.

### **Do residents need to make an appointment?**

Appointments are recommended to assure people have the time needed to ask questions and be monitored for safety during the 15 minutes required after vaccination is provided.

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### **Why can't I get a vaccine appointment from the health department in another county?**

Local Health Departments may decide to limit vaccinations to persons who reside in their county or health district. Please call ahead to confirm. Regional vaccination sites accept persons from every Kentucky county for vaccination, as long as they are current in an eligible phase.

### **Can employers sign up to have their employees vaccinated?**

Individuals, rather than employers, make appointments to be vaccinated. Team Kentucky will share information as this network expands via [kycovid19.ky.gov](https://kycovid19.ky.gov) and during Governor Andy Beshear's press conferences, and in [press releases](#). We understand many Kentuckians are eager to get vaccinated as quickly as possible and we are working to quickly build an information and delivery network to make it possible for Kentuckians to communicate their interest, sign up, and have confidence that they will have access as soon as vaccine quantities make it possible.