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Understanding the Vaccine Eligibility Guidance

Who is eligible to receive the vaccine now?
- Phase 1a: Residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities, as well as health care personnel, including clinicians residing outside of Kentucky but who provide care in Kentucky
- Phase 1b: Anyone 70 or older, first responders, K-12 personnel, and child care workers.
- Phase 1c: Anyone age 60 or older; anyone age 16 or older with any medical or behavioral health condition or conditions that the CDC reports ‘are’ or ‘might’ be at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness; all essential workers

As of March 1, 2021, the Kentucky COVID-19 vaccination eligibility phase moved to 1c. As able, vaccination sites should prioritize remaining phase 1a and 1b-eligible Kentuckians, particularly individuals over age 70. As vaccination sites enter phase 1c more fully, they are encouraged to prioritize persons aged 60 and older who face a higher COVID-19 mortality risk according to CDC guidelines. All vaccination sites are urged to administer 90% or more of all vaccine doses received within 7 days of arrival.

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.

With the recent Emergency Use Authorization of the 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?

Each state receives a vaccine allocation based on its population. The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services has directed that every vaccine provider in Kentucky shall ensure each vaccine recipient is either:
1. A resident of the Commonwealth of Kentucky able to demonstrate residency consistent with the requirements of KRS 186.010(12), or
2. An individual providing health care services involving direct care to patients in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
Why are some vaccination sites further along in the vaccine phases than others?

Vaccination sites across the Commonwealth serve populations with different needs. For example, one county may have a larger age 70 and older population, therefore, needing more time to vaccinate individuals in phase 1b. Some vaccination sites have already moved into phase 1c and plan to administer 90% or more of all vaccine doses received within 7 days of arrival. As of March 1, 2021, the Kentucky COVID-19 vaccination eligibility phase advanced to 1c.

Persons in Phase 1

What occupations are considered essential in Phase 1c?

The list is quite long, but grocery store workers, public transit workers, and service providers for vulnerable populations, among others, represent essential workers in this phase. To view the full list, visit kycovid19.ky.gov and click on the latest Vaccine Phases Update, or see the CDC’s list of essential workers.

I am an essential worker. What kind of proof will I need to provide to schedule and obtain my vaccine during Phase 1c?

To avoid any problems that could arise in obtaining your vaccine, we suggest bringing a work identification badge, recent paycheck stub, or perhaps a letter from your employer to your vaccination appointment.

I am a health care / dental worker. Who do I contact to get my vaccine?

In Kentucky, all health care personnel working in clinical settings (i.e., places where human patient care occurs), regardless of occupational role, are eligible for phase 1a immunization. At kycovid19.ky.gov, under the Healthcare/Labs tab, you can find a map showing the sites identified for this service. As more vaccine becomes available and this process quickly evolves, more locations will become available. Additionally, in many communities, local health departments and hospitals are doing targeted outreach to health care personnel to assist in vaccinating them. Please check your local health department or hospital’s website to see if this is an option for you.

I am a home health care worker. Why are we not addressed in Phase 1 along with the other health care workers?

Home-based health care workers are in phase 1a. In Kentucky, all health care personnel working in clinical settings (i.e., places where patient care occurs), regardless of occupational role, are eligible for phase 1a vaccine. At kycovid19.ky.gov, under the Healthcare/Labs tab, you can find a map showing the sites identified for this service. As more vaccine becomes available and this process quickly evolves, more locations will become available. Additionally, in many communities, local health departments and hospitals are doing targeted outreach to health care personnel to assist in vaccinating them. Please check your local health department or hospital website to see if this is an option for you.
I am a child care provider. Why am I not included in Phase 1b, along with teachers? They are not in school, but I am with the children in my care every day.

On February 15, 2021, Governor Beshear announced that child care workers had been moved from Phase 1c to phase 1b. They are now eligible to schedule a vaccination appointment at any site currently offering vaccines in Kentucky. Child care workers include individuals who professionally care for children other than their own.

I am over 70. Who do I contact to get my COVID-19 vaccine?

Individuals aged 70 and older are currently eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. For scheduling locations and opportunities, please visit vaccinemap.ky.gov or call the hotline at 855-598-2246 (for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, the TTY number is 855-326-4654).

We appreciate everyone’s patience as we work diligently to ensure all Kentuckians who want to receive a vaccine get one as quickly as possible.

Persons with Existing Health Conditions

What are the conditions that the CDC considers at increased risk for COVID-19, and therefore, eligible for a vaccine during Phase 1c?

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

As of March 15, Phase 1c was expanded to include the following conditions that the CDC states may increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
• Overweight (BMI > 25kg/m², but <30 kg/m²)
• Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
• Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
• Type 1 diabetes mellitus

A friend/family member is very vulnerable to COVID-19 and should be eligible for the vaccine, but their condition is not on the CDC list of high-risk conditions for COVID-19. How can I get an exception? OR

I care for a friend/family member who is very vulnerable to COVID-19, so I should receive the vaccine in order to protect that family member, whose condition is not on the CDC list of high-risk conditions for COVID-19. How can I get an exception?

We appreciate your desire to protect your friend/family member. The supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is still limited at this time. Taking into account guidance from the CDC, we are following a phased distribution system of eligible groups and are working diligently to ensure equitable access to vaccine for all Kentuckians.

Even after receiving both doses of the vaccine, persons need to continue wearing a mask, washing their hands frequently, keeping at least six feet of distance from persons not in their household, and staying home as much as possible for at least several more months. While the vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe disease (although not 100 percent), they might not prevent asymptomatic infection, meaning vaccine recipients might still be able to be infected, but not have symptoms and therefore, unknowingly spread the virus.

I am a caregiver for my elderly parents. Both parents have underlying health issues. Can I get the vaccine early to help protect my parents?

The Kentucky Department for Public Health understands everyone’s desire to get a vaccine. The vaccine supply remains limited at this time. Taking into account guidance from the CDC, Kentucky’s distribution plan was created with careful consideration for the safety and health of all Kentuckians. Each individual should be vaccinated in the phase in which they belong. We appreciate everyone’s kindness and caring for each other as well as patience as we work diligently to ensure all Kentuckians who want one will receive a vaccine as quickly as possible.

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. Each individual becomes eligible when their phase arises, and Kentucky’s vaccine phases take into account CDC recommendations to ensure that those most vulnerable to severe complications from the virus are vaccinated earliest. We believe this is the fairest approach given that demand still greatly exceeds the supply of vaccine.

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 500 sites across the

3/17/2021
Commonwealth, and we are announcing more each week.

Concerns with Vaccine Phase Guidance

Why does another group or person have priority over me?

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is still limited at this time. Taking into account guidance from the CDC, we are following a phased distribution system of eligible groups and are working diligently to ensure equitable access to vaccine for all Kentuckians.

We ask for and appreciate your patience. Every Kentuckian will eventually have access to the vaccine.

I disagree with the system you are using to get people vaccinated. I have some good suggestions about how to improve it.

Thank you so much for your interest in helping Kentuckians get vaccinated quickly. We have received a tremendous number of suggestions. We are relying on the best advice of experts and have recently dedicated a new task force to help us ramp up our vaccine sites. They have access to the best practices from around the country and are adapting those practices to fit the needs of Kentucky.

For general inquiries about COVID-19 or the vaccination plan, visit kycovid19.ky.gov or email KYcovid19@ky.gov.

My situation deserves an exception to the phased distribution system.

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is still limited at this time. Taking into account guidance from the CDC, we are following a phased distribution system of eligible groups. For more information regarding phases, please visit the kycovid19.ky.gov website. We ask for and appreciate your patience. Every Kentuckian will eventually have access to the vaccine.

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 is make me sick?

An adenovirus is a type of virus that causes the common cold and 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 cannot cause illness, but it does create antibodies.

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 the make the vaccines definitely worth getting.

The 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?**

Initially, no. The newly approved vaccines are very limited in quantity at the start. National efforts are underway to rapidly expand the supply of vaccines, however, and the goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccine as larger quantities are available. As vaccine quantities increase, hundreds of additional providers will begin to administer the 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 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 more than 100 miles outside of the Kentucky border and are unable to return for the second dose, you may request assistance by completing the “COVID-19 Vaccine Unsupported Second Dose Assistance” form. Applicants will be required to upload a picture of their photo ID and COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. Submissions will be monitored and reviewed daily with a response from KDPH within 72 hours.

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 may request assistance by completing the “COVID-19 Vaccine Unsupported Second Dose Assistance” form. Applicants will be required to upload a picture of their photo ID and COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. Submissions will be monitored and reviewed daily with a response from KDPH within 72 hours. Coordination for unsupported second doses will occur directly between a KDPH and a representative from the regional vaccination administration site located near the person’s residence.

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 has been approved for teens in this age group. 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. Healthy persons under the age of 40 are not likely to have access to COVID-19 vaccination until at least the summer of 2021. Learn more about Kentucky’s vaccine phases at kycovid.ky.gov.

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.

Preparing for Vaccination

Costs and Insurance

How much does the COVID-19 vaccine cost?

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 for administration of the vaccine; however, you cannot be turned away from receiving the vaccine due to lack of payment.

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
- Documentation showing proof of Kentucky residency, such as your driver’s license or a utility bill
- Health insurance information, if you have it
- Though not required, we suggest bringing a work identification badge, recent paycheck stub, or perhaps a letter from your employer to verify your essential worker status.

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.

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.

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

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 with 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 who do not live in your household.

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?

There are currently no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or milk production/excretion. mRNA vaccines are not considered live virus vaccines and are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. If a lactating woman is part of a group (e.g., health care personnel) who is recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, she may choose to be vaccinated. Also, there is little data on these mRNA vaccines in pregnant women. However, 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.

**Recipient Fact Sheets**

Pfizer: labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=14472&format=pdf
Johnson & Johnson: 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 February 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
Fordo quarantine and COVID-19 testing if you’ve been around someone who has COVID-19
  o 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
  • Delay domestic and international travel
  • 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 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.

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 are 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/ 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.

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 has instructed all vaccine administration sites to administer at least 90% of all vaccines they receive within seven days of arrival at their facility. Kentucky is committed to making the vaccine available to all willing Kentuckians as quickly and efficiently as vaccine quantities allow. The [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) 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](http://vaccinemap.ky.gov).
When can I get vaccinated?

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is still limited at this time. As recommended by the CDC, initial efforts have been made to provide early doses of COVID-19 vaccine to health care personnel, long-term care facility residents, and persons ages 70 and older. The CDC based it on recommendations on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), an independent panel of medical and public health experts. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as large quantities of vaccine are available.

We also have instructed providers to use at least 90% of doses within a week of receipt. We are following a phased distribution system of eligible groups.

Given currently limited vaccine supplies and manufacturers, we anticipate working through the summer to vaccinate those persons in the first three phases, which are:

- **Phase 1a**: Residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities, as well as health care personnel.
- **Phase 1b**: Anyone 70 or older, first responders, child care workers and K-12 personnel.
- **Phase 1c**: Anyone 60 or older, anyone 16 or older who has any medical or behavioral health condition or conditions that the CDC reports ‘are’ or ‘might’ be at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness; all essential workers
- **Phase 2**: Anyone age 40 or older.
- **Phase 3**: Anyone age 16 or older.
- **Phase 4**: Children under the age of 16 if the vaccine is approved for this age group (est. 18% of KY population)

For more detail about who falls into these categories, please visit kycovid19.ky.gov.

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

Governor Beshear recently announced that he expects every adult in Kentucky will be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of May 2021. The largest vaccine phase is 1c, which became eligible on March 1, 2021.

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. 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?

All Kentuckians are asked to check the vaccine administration phase currently targeted as shown on kycovid19.ky.gov and to exercise their kindness and care for others by following the phases so those most at risk for severe COVID-19 have access to the vaccine as quickly as possible.

Vaccine administration sites are doing their best to follow the phasing schedule. At times, persons from later phases may be vaccinated earlier than anticipated as sites strive to administer at least 90% of the vaccine they receive within seven days of receiving it.

But, yes, if a person has clearly violated the current vaccination phase and it is not yet their time, they may be turned away from scheduling themselves for vaccination or receiving a vaccination on site until the phase for which they are eligible is reached.

Why is the COVID-19 vaccine supply not being used quickly? It seems we have much more vaccine than is being used.

In order to ensure efficient use of the vaccine, we require that at least 90% of the vaccine must be administered within seven days of receipt. Providers also are required to report the vaccines they administer within 24 hours. We then update the online reports as quickly as possible.

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) 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.

We recently announced the Find-A-Vaccine website (vaccine.ky.gov) and hotline (855-598-2246; for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, the TTY 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.

**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. Each individual will become eligible when their phase arises and will then be able to seek vaccination at vaccine administration sites that will increase in number and distribution as more vaccine becomes available. Team Kentucky will share information as this network expands via kycovid.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.