


# IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

ISSUE NO 6 | MARCH 17, 2021



VACCINE DOSES  
ADMINISTERED IN  
LOUISIANA

1,418,805

  
MEDICARE  
UPDATES COVID-  
19 VACCINE  
ADMINISTRATION  
PAYMENT

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is updating the Medicare payment rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration. (Page 2)

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

Some people are concerned about the effectiveness of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. They think it is an inferior product compared to the other two, 2-dose series vaccines. What can be done to increase confidence in this vaccine?

According to the [State of Vaccine Confidence Insights Report](#) issued this week, public health officials and local leaders should confront misinformation with evidence-based messaging. This includes using local, trusted people with community connections to promote the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. The messages should promote facts and dispel misinformation with the ultimate goal of improving vaccine confidence. Other recommendations include:

- Expand available toolkits to include innovative practices for identifying trusted community messengers and utilizing micro-influencers.
- Empower healthcare professionals to relay information about vaccine side effects, what to expect after vaccination, and how to prepare for vaccination appointments.
- Strengthen the capacity of healthcare professionals to have empathetic vaccine conversations, address myths and common questions, and provide tailored vaccine information to patients.

CDC GIVES  
VACCINATION  
PRIORITY TO  
SCHOOLS

Pharmacies that are part of CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are giving COVID-19 vaccination priority to all school staff and childcare workers throughout the month of March. (Page 2)

# WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE



Here is an overview of major updates that occurred over the week.

## Medicare COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Payment

On March 15, 2021, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is updating the Medicare payment rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration. Effective for services furnished on or after March 15, 2021, the new Medicare payment rate for administering a COVID-19 vaccine will be **approximately \$40 to administer each dose of a COVID-19 vaccine**. This means that starting on March 15, 2021, for single dose COVID-19 vaccines, Medicare will pay approximately \$40 for its administration.

Starting on March 15, 2021, for COVID-19 vaccines requiring multiple doses, Medicare will pay approximately \$40 for each dose in the series. This rate reflects updated information about the costs involved in administering the COVID-19 vaccine for different types of providers and suppliers, and the additional resources necessary to ensure the vaccine is administered safely and appropriately. The rate will be geographically adjusted based on where the service is furnished.

While CMS generally implements changes to Medicare payment rates for specific services through notice and comment rulemaking, the payment rate changes for these specific services are being implemented to respond quickly to new information during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

For COVID-19 vaccine administration services furnished before March 15, 2021, the Medicare payment rate for a single-dose vaccine or for the final dose in a series is \$28.39. For a COVID-19 vaccine requiring a series of two or more doses, the payment rate is \$16.94 for the initial dose(s) in the series and \$28.39 for the final dose in the series. These rates are also geographically adjusted.

Note: these rates do not apply for entities that are paid for preventive vaccines and their administration at reasonable cost. We also note that, as indicated in the 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule, CMS continues to seek additional information from the public for our further consideration as we review and establish payment rates for vaccine administration services during the public health emergency and on a longer term basis. **There's no cost for patients.**

People with Medicare pay nothing for COVID-19 vaccines:

- No copayment/coinsurance
- No deductible

Get the most up-to-date [list of billing codes, payment allowances, and effective dates](#).



## CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy Program Gives Vaccination Priority to Teachers, School Staff, and Childcare Workers

Pharmacies that are part of CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are giving COVID-19 vaccination priority to all school staff and childcare workers throughout the month of March.

### Who can get vaccinated?

- Teachers and staff in
  - Pre K-12 schools
  - Childcare centers
  - Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Licensed childcare providers, including center-based and family care providers
- Classroom aides
- Bus drivers
- Janitors
- Administration staff
- Cafeteria workers
- Substitute teachers

### How can school and childcare staff schedule a vaccine appointment?



Teachers, school staff, and childcare workers who are interested in getting vaccinated should:

- Visit the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program website](#) to see which pharmacies are participating in your state. Most pharmacy partners are using online scheduling systems to schedule vaccination appointments for those eligible based on their limited vaccine supply. Check your local pharmacy's website to sign up.
- Visit [CovidVaccine.La.Gov](#) to find vaccine locations nearby.
- Visit [VaccineFinder.org](#) to find out where vaccine is available in your community.

## CDC Encourages Vaccine Recipients to Register for V-safe – After Vaccination Health Checker



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 vaccine. Through V-safe, you can quickly tell 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. V-safe will also remind you to get your second COVID-19 vaccine dose if you need one.

**Note: V-safe cannot schedule vaccine appointments**, including second doses of COVID-19 vaccines. If you need to schedule, reschedule, or cancel a COVID-19 vaccination appointment, contact the location that set up your appointment or a vaccine



provider in your area. This may be your state or local health department, employer, or vaccine provider.

To register for V-safe, visit [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov).

## How to Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

Important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19 virus:



### GET VACCINATED

- Authorized COVID-19 vaccines can help protect you from COVID-19.
- You should get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you.
- Once you are fully vaccinated, you may be able to start doing some things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic.



### WEAR A MASK

- Everyone 2 years and older should wear a mask in public.
- Wear your mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face.



### STAY 6 FEET AWAY FROM OTHERS

- Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.



### AVOID CROWDS AND POORLY VENTILATED SPACES

- Avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible.



### WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.



### COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES

- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.



### CLEAN AND DISINFECT

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.



### MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

- Be alert for symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.

## COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

### SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 66.28%
- **Black:** 22.68%
- **American Indian:** 0.21%
- **Asian:** 1.8%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.19%
- **Unknown:** 1.53%
- **Other:** 7.32%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 0.02%
- **18-29:** 4.64%
- **30-39:** 7.01%
- **40-49:** 7.87%
- **50-59:** 10.38%
- **60-69:** 20.38%
- **70+:** 49.69%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY GENDER:

- **Female:** 59.7%
- **Male:** 40.02%
- **Unknown:** 0.29%

All breakdowns shown here are for Louisiana residents only. Race data completeness is expected to improve as we continue our outreach with vaccine providers.

## GOOD READS

**Moderna gives 1<sup>st</sup> vaccine shots to young kids as part of COVID-19 study** – This article talks about Moderna starting to study the safety and effectiveness of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in kids ages 6 months to 12 years old.

Read more at [npr.org](https://www.npr.org) ([tinyurl.com/jxc76xzi](https://tinyurl.com/jxc76xzi)).

**Nurses fight conspiracy theories along with coronavirus** – Nurses talk about their experiences hearing conspiracy theories from patients throughout the pandemic.

Read more at [apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com) ([tinyurl.com/47tvrz7c](https://tinyurl.com/47tvrz7c)).

**With Black vaccination rates lagging, Louisiana churches become inoculation hubs** – This article talks about churches becoming a major vaccination location for Black populations in Louisiana.

Read more at [theadvocate.com](https://theadvocate.com) ([tinyurl.com/y22px3d6](https://tinyurl.com/y22px3d6)).