

# IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

ISSUE NO 19 | JUNE 16, 2021



VACCINE DOSES  
ADMINISTERED IN  
LOUISIANA

3,119,712

EXTENSION OF  
JOHNSON &  
JOHNSON  
VACCINE SHELF  
LIFE

The FDA has authorized an extension of the shelf life for the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. (Page 2)

LDH REQUESTS  
PROVIDERS TO  
CONSIDER USING  
PFIZER COVID-19  
VACCINE

LDH is asking providers to consider ordering Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, due to current large quantities in-stock. (Page 2)

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

### How serious is the new Delta variant?

As reported by the news media, the CDC has now named Delta (B.1.617.2) a “variant of concern” as it spreads throughout the U.S. Recent research suggests the Delta variant spreads more rapidly than the original coronavirus variant, and some antibody treatments may not be as effective as they are against other variants.

On a better note, the CDC said earlier this week that the three vaccines authorized in the U.S. are highly effective against the variant. Still the emergence of this variant, again, heightens the need for all Americans who have not gotten the shot to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible.

Here are some other key points about Delta:

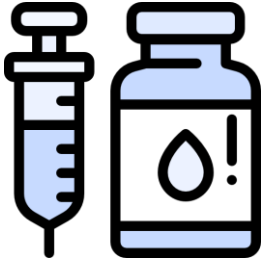
- CDC’s Nowcast predicts Delta to be 9.9 percent of all viruses sequenced in the U.S. and 12.7 percent in the region that includes Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- While further studies are needed, initial evidence suggests that Delta is more transmissible compared with other variants, including B.1.1.7 (Alpha).
- Vaccines authorized for use in the United States have been reported to be effective against Delta B.1.617.2 as well as other variants.

Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and to stop this variant from spreading and becoming dominant in the US.

# WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

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

## Extension of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Shelf Life



**On Thursday, June 10, 2021, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized an extension of the shelf life for the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen/J&J) single-shot COVID-19 vaccine from 3 months to 4.5 months.**

The decision is based on data from ongoing stability assessment studies, which have demonstrated that the vaccine is stable at 4.5 months when refrigerated at temperatures of 36 to 46°F (2 to 8°C). Expiration dates will be updated on [www.vaxcheck.jnj](http://www.vaxcheck.jnj). Vaccine providers should visit [www.vaxcheck.jnj](http://www.vaxcheck.jnj) to confirm the latest expiration dates of the vaccine, including those currently available for administration throughout the US.

A single-shot vaccine that provides protection and prevents hospitalization and death is an important tool in the global fight against COVID-19. Evidence from the Phase 3 ENSEMBLE study demonstrates the efficacy of the single-shot COVID-19 vaccine, including against viral variants that are highly prevalent. Regardless of race and ethnicity, age, geographic location, and comorbidities, these results remain consistent.

Johnson & Johnson continues to work with the U.S. government and health authorities to support the use of the vaccine, which plays an important role in combating the pandemic, including among those who wish to be fully vaccinated with one shot.

For more information on the shelf-life extension, visit [jnj.com](http://jnj.com).

## LDH Requests Providers Consider Using Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine

LDH is filling a majority of new COVID-19 vaccine orders with the vaccine stock that is currently stored at the in-state vaccine depot operated by Morris & Dickson. Filling orders in this manner helps to ensure that the doses already within the state, get administered and are not wasted. Currently, large quantities of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines are in stock, while far fewer Moderna COVID-19 vaccines remain.

**To help the state in its efforts to reduce the amount of unordered Pfizer doses at the depot, the state asks providers to consider ordering Pfizer vaccines for future first (prime) dose purposes.** There are no requirements to order and utilize Pfizer over any other available product; the state only asks that

providers consider the use of the Pfizer vaccine for their patients if they have not yet done so already.

At one time, the Pfizer vaccine had a very short shelf life once it was taken out of ultra-cold storage, but the updated guidance from the FDA and CDC now allows for extended storage capabilities.

Once the vaccine is removed from ultra-cold storage, vials may be shipped and stored at freezer temperatures of -25 to -15°C (-13 to 5°F) for up to 2 weeks. After two weeks, the vaccine must either be returned to ultra-cold temperatures or stored in the refrigerator for up to 30 days or until the expiration date, whichever is shorter. *Please note: The vaccine can only be returned to ultra-cold storage one time after it has stored in the freezer.* In the refrigerator, the vaccine can be kept at 2 to 8°C (35 to 46°F) for up to 30 days. This is a total of 45 days that Pfizer can be stored in a normal freezer/refrigerator unit.

Another advantage of the Pfizer vaccine is that it comes in six dose vials, while the new Moderna vials contain 14 doses. Having a smaller dose vial could be beneficial to some providers at this point of the vaccination response, as there may be instances of fewer individuals seeking vaccination within a particular timeframe.

When using the Pfizer product in these instances, it equates to possibly fewer doses wasted. All vaccine products, including Pfizer, can be ordered in quantities of as little as one vial, meaning providers could order a very small amount of vaccine and have about 45 days to use it.

It is expected to have some vaccine doses wasted at this point in the vaccination campaign. It will not reflect poorly on vaccine providers. As the CDC has advised, please do not pass up an opportunity to vaccinate someone even if it may, unfortunately, result in some doses wasted.



## CDC Encourages COVID-19 Vaccination Upon Discharge from Hospitals, Emergency Departments, and Urgent Care Facilities

To promote access to COVID-19 vaccination, providers are encouraged to administer vaccinations at discharge to patients in hospitals, emergency departments (EDs), and urgent care facilities (UCs). The CDC will continue to provide technical assistance to support jurisdictions in distributing vaccines and enrolling new

facilities with a focus on reaching disproportionately affected communities.

- EDs serve as the primary – and often only – health care access point for up to a fifth of the U.S. population.
- UCs handle about 89 million patient visits each year, or more than 29% of all primary care visits in the country, and nearly 15% of all outpatient physician visits.
- Expanding COVID-19 vaccine availability via these settings can therefore increase access to vaccinations.

Hospitals, EDs, and UC facilities in the U.S. can play an influential role in building confidence in and improving uptake of COVID-19 vaccine, as healthcare providers are the most trusted source of health information.

Using these additional sites to administer vaccines can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community and reduce morbidity and mortality related to the disease.

For more information on jurisdictions increasing access to vaccination opportunities, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

## President Biden to Announce National Month of Action to Mobilize an All-of-America Sprint to Get More People Vaccinated by July 4<sup>th</sup>

President Biden announced a National Month of Action to mobilize an all-of-America sprint to get 70% of U.S. adults at least one shot by July 4<sup>th</sup>, so that more people can get the protection they need to be safe from a pandemic that has taken the lives of nearly 600,000 Americans.

Throughout the month, national organizations, local government leaders, community-based and faith-based partners, businesses, employers, social media influencers, celebrities, athletes, colleges, young people, and thousands of volunteers across the nation will work together to get their communities vaccinated.

To learn more about National Vaccine Month of Action, visit [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov).



## LOUISIANA COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

### SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 59.86%
- **Black:** 28.41%
- **American Indian:** 0.31%
- **Asian:** 2.85%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.21%
- **Unknown:** 1.18%
- **Other:** 7.18%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 1.44%
- **18-29:** 9.84%
- **30-39:** 11.42%
- **40-49:** 12.86%
- **50-59:** 17.75%
- **60-69:** 22.75%
- **70+:** 23.95%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY GENDER:

- **Female:** 56.09%
- **Male:** 43.62%
- **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

**Workers push back against hospitals requiring COVID vaccines** – This article talks about how many hospital employees are arguing that it's wrong for their employers to force hospital workers to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

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

**Coronavirus infections dropping where people are vaccinated, rising where they are not** – This article talks about how states with higher vaccination rates have fewer coronavirus cases, while states with lower rates are seeing higher coronavirus cases.

Read more at [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com).

**How the pandemic is still ruining our plans** – This article talks about how the pandemic has made us look at different ways of doing things.

Read more at [axios.com](https://www.axios.com).