



## COVID-19 VACCINE: What You Need to Know

LAST UPDATED: 3/24/2021

### Current COVID-19 vaccines

There are three COVID-19 vaccines currently in use: the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (commonly called the Pfizer vaccine), the Moderna vaccine and the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine.

### Safe and effective

**All three vaccines are 100% effective at preventing serious hospitalizations and deaths.**

Vaccines are authorized for use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), meaning trials have proven the vaccines an effective defense against COVID-19. The FDA and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will continue to monitor safety and effectiveness data.

Safety is a top priority. No steps were skipped during the clinical trials and data review process for COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID vaccines are being held to the same standards as other vaccines to make sure they are safe.

### No cost to the patient

The federal government is making vaccines available at no cost. You cannot be charged for a vaccine or a regular office visit to receive a vaccine, but your insurance may be billed an administration fee or the federal government if you are uninsured.

### Who gets it right now

#### **Priority Group 1A:**

- Hospital personnel
- Staff and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Frontline responders to serve as vaccinators (Emergency Medical Services, fire personnel and law enforcement).

#### **Priority Group 1B, Tier 1:**

- People ages 65 or older

High-risk medical conditions (ages 18 and up, or ages 16 and up for Pfizer vaccine only):

- Asthma (moderate to severe)

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- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Current or former smoker
- Cystic fibrosis
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Overweight (body mass index [BMI] of 25 or higher but less than 30)
- Obesity (BMI of 30 or higher but less than 40)
- Severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Severe neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Sickle cell disease
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

### Eligibility by workforce category:

- Ambulatory and outpatient providers and staff
  - Behavioral health providers and staff
  - Dental providers and staff
  - Community care providers and staff
  - Dialysis providers and staff
  - Non-emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) providers and staff
  - Urgent care clinic providers and staff
- Professional home care providers (including hospice workers), unpaid family caregivers and home care recipients (including older and younger people with disabilities over the age of 16 who receive community or home-based care, as well as clients of home health agencies)

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- American Sign Language (ASL) and foreign language interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSPs) working in community and clinic-based settings, and clients who are both deaf and blind
- Health-related support personnel (lab staff, mortuary staff who have contact with corpses, pharmacy staff)
- Schools of allied health students, residents and staff
- Law enforcement and other first responders
- Louisiana Unified Command Group
- State legislators
- State and local essential COVID emergency response personnel
- Some elections staff ahead of March and April elections
- Teachers and any other support staff working on site in K-12 or daycare
- Any staff working in congregate facilities (prisons/jails, shelters, dorms, rehab/detox centers, group homes)

### **Priority Group 1B, Tier 2**

All essential workers:

- Bank tellers
- Child, youth and family service workers
- Clergy
- Construction workers
- Energy workers
- Food and agricultural workers
- Food service (restaurant) workers, hotel workers and other hospitality workers
- Frontline government workers
- Grocery store workers
- Higher education faculty/staff
- In-home caregivers (including paid and unpaid caregivers)
- IT and telecommunications workers
- Judges, court staff, clerks of court and staff, district attorneys and public defenders
- Manufacturing workers
- Media workers
- Postal workers
- Public and private security and emergency preparedness workers
- Public health workers



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- Public safety engineers/workers
- Transportation workers including river pilots
- Veterinarians and support staff
- Water and wastewater workers
- Waste management workers

### General public

**Beginning Monday, March 29, everyone in Louisiana ages 18 and older is eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19.**

Having a large portion of the population vaccinated is our best shot at a return to some form of normalcy. Based on conversations with our federal partners, we are encouraged that Louisiana will receive enough doses to vaccinate everyone who wants a shot.