

## COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs FOR NM WORKFORCE

**Updates March 15:** "What is the definition of 'fully vaccinated?'" was added on page 2.

**Q: I have completed the enrollment process. How do I schedule my first vaccination?**

**A:** Once your enrollment has been processed and your eligibility confirmed, you will receive an email with a link to the scheduling tool. It is preferred that you make an appointment to ensure we have sufficient vaccine.

**Q: I need to schedule an appointment for my second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine series, but there are no available appointments on the designated day. What is my next step?**

**A:** Please contact the MyNM Service Center at [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) or 312.926.HELP (4357) for assistance with scheduling your second dose.

**Q: I received the first dose of my vaccine from a previous employer. Can I get the second dose at NM?**

**A:** The preference is that you will complete your vaccine series at the same location. If your previous employer will not provide your second dose, please contact the MyNM Service Center at [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) or 312.926.HELP (4357) for assistance with scheduling your second dose.

**Q: I received the first dose of the vaccine from Walgreens or CVS. Can I get the second dose through NM?**

**A:** No. You must complete your vaccine series through the original source.

**Q: I received my COVID-19 vaccination outside of Northwestern Medicine. Where can I submit my vaccination documentation?**

**A:** Documentation is not required, but it is encouraged and can be submitted through the immunization upload process on NMI. Please use [this job aid](#) (NMI login required).

### **Second Dose**

**Q: I had the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and then tested positive for COVID-19. Can I still get the second dose of the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes. You will need to complete your 10-day quarantine period prior to receiving the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. If you will miss the designated day for your second dose due to the quarantine period, please contact MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6.4357) or [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) as soon as possible to identify another opportunity.

**Q: I have received my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. How will I be notified to schedule the second dose?**

**A:** Following your first vaccination, you will receive an email with confirmation of the first dose, which includes a link to schedule your second-dose appointment. The date of your second-dose appointment will follow manufacturer guidelines: The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is given in two doses, 21 days apart; the Moderna vaccine is given in two doses, 28 days apart. The day count begins the day **after** the first vaccination. You will be required to get your second dose at the same location as your first. See the second-dose schedule [here](#). We are closely monitoring information about COVID-19 vaccines as it is released to ensure we are consistent with instructions from the manufacturers, the CDC and our local health departments. If the scheduled date is not feasible, please contact MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6.4357) or [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) to determine what options may be available. Rescheduling may not always be possible, and exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: Due to unforeseen circumstances, my schedule does not allow me to receive the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine on the designated day. What are my next steps?**

**A:** Each person who received the vaccine attested during scheduling and again when receiving the vaccine that they would be able to return on a designated day for their second dose. The supply from the CDC and local health departments is based on vaccination reports that we are required to submit on a daily basis. All members of the NM workforce are encouraged to make arrangements to be available on their designated day. If that is not feasible, contact MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6.4357) or [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) to determine what options may be available. Rescheduling may not always be possible, and exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: I am scheduled to work on the day I am supposed to get my second dose of the vaccine. Will I have to use PTO if I have to be away from work for a substantial amount of time due to traveling to another location?**

**A:** Not necessarily. You should work with your manager to determine what best works with your schedule and the needs of the department. If you must change your appointment date, please contact MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6.4357) or [mynmservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynmservicecenter@nm.org) to identify an available option. Rescheduling may not always be possible, and exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: I am unable to travel to the same location for my second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Can I get the second dose at a different location?**

**A:** No. Per the attestation that you completed when scheduling and receiving the vaccine, you must return to the same location for your second dose.

**Q: How far apart are doses of the COVID-19 vaccine administered?**

**A:** Timing between first and second doses depends on which vaccine you receive. The two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine should be given 21 days apart. The two doses of the Moderna vaccine should be given 28 days apart. Note that the day count begins the day **after** first vaccination. See the second-dose schedule [here](#).

### **General**

**NEW Q: What is the definition of “fully vaccinated?”**

**A:** People are considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

If it has been less than two weeks since your final or only shot (see criteria above), you are NOT fully protected.

**Q: Now that I’m vaccinated, do I still have to follow the established COVID-19 safety protocols?**

**A:** Yes. Getting vaccinated is just one of many tools in use to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. You must continue to wear a mask, physically distance and wash your hands. When at work, staff should continue to follow these best practices as well as the posted PPE guidelines on NMI.

**Q: What should I do if I feel unwell following the vaccine and need to stay home?**

**A:** If you feel you are unable to perform the functions of your role, you should stay home. Please complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine Adverse Reactions Questionnaire](#), which will direct you to any next steps.

**Q: What if I have an adverse effect from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** Complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine Adverse Reactions Questionnaire](#), which will direct you to any next steps.

**Q: Where can I get documentation regarding my COVID-19 vaccination?**

**A:** All staff can access their NM immunization records by visiting the Health and Safety Employee Resource Center on NMI. Click the “My Immunization Information” to access a printable document.

**Q: Will I get a COVID-19 vaccine card?**

**A:** You will not be given a card at the vaccine clinic, as it is not our practice to fill out and distribute cards that include protected health information. However, you can print one from NMI. Go to NMI > Applications > Safety & Risk > [Safety Net Admin](#) (login required). Click on the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, which will create a digital version of the card with all of your information pre-populated.

**Q: Am I still able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine while on leave?**

**A:** Yes. Staff who are on leave are still eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine through NM. You will need to complete the COVID-19 Vaccine Enrollment Form through the NM Workforce app. You will be notified by email when there is an opportunity for you to schedule your vaccination. Please note that staff who choose to get the vaccine while on leave are coming in voluntarily and will not be paid for their time.

**Q: Can I travel to an NM site to get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am quarantining due to travel or an exposure?**

**A:** No. If you are under quarantine for any reason, you should postpone your vaccination date until your quarantine period is complete.

**Q: Do I still have to quarantine after traveling if I have been vaccinated and live or work in Chicago?**

**A:** Vaccination is just one tool in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. NM is continuing to follow the guidelines of the CDC and local health departments, including requirements around quarantine following travel.

**Q: Should I get the vaccine if I have had a COVID-19 infection in the last 90 days?**

**A:** Evidence suggests that your body will have a natural immunity in the short term, and the likelihood of reinfection is very low. You may defer vaccination for 90 days post infection or you may choose to get vaccinated. In order to make your vaccine appointment you must be cleared from the isolation period. Also note that if your COVID-19 diagnosis is recent, you may experience more intense side effects. Click the links to review more information about clinical conditions related to both the [Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) COVID-19 vaccines.

**Q: Under what circumstances should I not get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** For more information about COVID-19 vaccine considerations, read the Considerations Before Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine informational flyers for the [Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) vaccines.

**Q: Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am planning to conceive?**

**A:** Recent studies have suggested pregnancy is a risk factor for a severe COVID-19 infection and based on overall assessment of the mRNA COVID vaccines, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) Task Force does not recommend withholding the vaccine from patients who are planning to conceive. Because COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are not composed of live virus, they are not thought to cause an increased risk of infertility or first or second trimester loss.

Per ASRM, patients undergoing fertility treatment and pregnant patients should be encouraged to receive vaccination based on eligibility criteria. Since the vaccine is not a live virus, there is no reason to delay pregnancy attempts because of vaccination administration or to defer treatment until the second dose has been administered. For additional information, view the [ASRM](#) website.

NM recommends that you talk to your personal physician about any concerns or questions regarding your personal health and to make a shared decision on whether to proceed with vaccination.

**Q: Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

**A:** The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine (SMFM) do not recommend withholding the vaccine from patients who are currently pregnant or lactating. Because COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are not composed of live virus, they are not thought to cause an increased risk of stillbirth or congenital anomalies. The vaccine is not likely to be present in breast milk and as it is not orally absorbed, any amount that is present is unlikely to cause clinical issues.

Pregnant and lactating women were excluded from the initial Phase III trials of the vaccines, so specific safety data in these populations is not yet available and further studies are planned. However, the way mRNA vaccines work and the existing safety data provide reassurance regarding the safety of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines during pregnancy and lactation. The FDA Emergency Use Authorizations permit the vaccination of pregnant and breastfeeding individuals with a requirement that the vaccine manufacturers conduct post-authorization observational studies in pregnancy.

**[Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19 | ACOG](#)**

**[https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2683/COVID\\_vaccine\\_Patients\\_01-05-21\\_AWHONN\\_ETC\\_ENDORSED\\_FINAL\\_age\\_corrected.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2683/COVID_vaccine_Patients_01-05-21_AWHONN_ETC_ENDORSED_FINAL_age_corrected.pdf)**

NM recommends that you talk to your personal physician about any concerns or questions regarding your personal health and to make a shared decision on whether to proceed with vaccination.

**Q: I completed the enrollment form already. Can I change my decision to opt in or opt out?**

**A:** Yes. Please review the following to determine your next steps:

- If you originally opted out of receiving the vaccine, you can submit a new enrollment form.
- If you originally opted in and have not scheduled an appointment, you can submit a new enrollment form.
- If you originally opted in and have already scheduled an appointment, please contact the MyNM Service Center at [MyNMservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMservicecenter@nm.org) or 312.926.HELP (4357) and ask to be removed from the list of those who have enrolled.

**Q: Where can I find more information about COVID-19 vaccines?**

**A:** Information on the COVID vaccines is being released from the manufacturers and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a regular basis. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for additional information.

**Q: What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?**

**A:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has made the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine available under a mechanism called an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). An EUA is issued when circumstances exist that justify the emergency use of drugs and biological products, such as with the COVID-19 pandemic. The FDA may issue an EUA when certain criteria are met, including that there are no adequate, approved and available alternatives. Additionally, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the product must show scientific evidence that it is effective in preventing COVID-19.

**Q: Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

**A:** Initial data shows the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective and the Moderna vaccine is 94.5% effective. Historically vaccines have greatly reduced and sometimes even eliminated many infectious diseases. Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may lower your chance of becoming infected, or may decrease the severity of the disease if you do become infected. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for information about COVID-19 vaccines.

**Q: One of my family members is considered high-risk, can they get a vaccine through NM?**

**A:** No, not initially. The CDC has prioritized the initial doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities.

**Q: Will the COVID-19 vaccine be required similar to the flu shot?**

**A:** No, not at this time. Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary.

**Q: Will I get to choose the brand of vaccine I receive?**

**A:** No. The vaccine(s) will be administered based on our allocation.

**Q: Why do I need two shots of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses from the same manufacturer. You need to get the second dose in order for the vaccine to be most effective.

**Q: How far apart are doses of the COVID-19 vaccine administered?**

**A:** The second dose may be administered approximately 21-28 days after the initial dose, depending on the brand of vaccine. Scheduling for your second appointment will occur at the time of the first vaccination.

**Q: I am leaving NM before I would be eligible for the second dose of the vaccine? Should I get the first dose?**

**A:** Because you must complete the series in order for the vaccine to be effective, you should not start the process prior to leaving NM. Instead, you should start the vaccination process when it can be tracked and you can ensure you are able to get both doses within the prescribed time.

If the circumstance arises that you are leaving NM before the scheduled second dose, NM is committed to completing the vaccine series and you should return on the date and location noted for your second dose. As you will not have a badge, please ensure you have state-issued identification and explain the situation at registration. In this unique situation, you will be given the CDC issued card on which your series vaccination can be documented. Please contact the MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6.4357) or [mynm-servicecenter@nm.org](mailto:mynm-servicecenter@nm.org) with any questions or assistance in confirming the date, time and location of a second dose appointment.

**Q: Will I have to pay for the COVID-19 vaccination?**

**A:** No. The vaccine will be offered to the NM workforce at no cost.

**Q: Who do I contact if I have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** Direct questions to the MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6-4357) or [MyNMServicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMServicecenter@nm.org).

***Enrollment, Prioritization and Scheduling*****Q: Who will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine offered through NM?**

**A:** The vaccine will be offered to employees, physicians, contracted staff, medical students, residents and fellows as supply allows. Individuals must complete the enrollment process.

**Q: How do I complete the enrollment process?**

**A:** Go to [NM COVID-19 Applications](#) link and click on COVID-19 Vaccine Enrollment the enrollment process. Please note that you will have to log in with your NM user ID and password to complete the form. If you have difficulty logging in, contact the MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6-4357) or [MyNMServicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMServicecenter@nm.org).

**Q: Will I get a COVID-19 vaccine card?**

**A:** No. You will be sent confirmation of each dose via email. The dates of vaccination will become part of your employee health record. The vaccination will not become part of your MyNM (formerly known as MyChart) patient record unless you choose to provide it to your healthcare provider. You can access your NM immunization records by visiting the Health and Safety Employee Resource Center on NMI. Click the “My Immunization Information” to access a printable document. NM is committed to protecting the confidentiality of your medical information and it is not our practice to fill out and distribute cards that include protected health information.

**Q: Due to my provider or employee status, I was able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at another hospital. How do I get my name removed from the NM list?**

**A:** If you have not yet scheduled an appointment, go back to the enrollment form and submit a new one to opt-out of NM’s vaccination process. That will remove you from the contact list.

If you have scheduled an appointment, cancel that appointment to ensure that another member of the workforce can fill that slot and contact the MyNM Service Center at 312.926.HELP (6-4357) or [MyNMServicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMServicecenter@nm.org) to be removed from the opt-in list.

**Clinical****Q: What is mRNA and why is it important in the development of the COVID-19 vaccines?**

**A:** Most vaccines use a weakened or inactivated version of components of the virus to stimulate the body’s immune response to create antibodies. mRNA vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. Instead, mRNA teaches our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects against infection if exposed to the real COVID-19 virus. In addition to the benefit of using a non-infectious element, the mRNA process also allows for shorter manufacturing time.

**Q: If I have had the flu shot, should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Is it possible to get sick after having the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** Similar to the flu vaccine, some people may have side effects from a vaccine.

**Q: Is it safe to be around my family or roommates after I get the vaccine?**

**A:** Yes. You should continue the recommended protocols of universal masking, physical distancing and hand hygiene with those outside of your home.

**Provider****Q: If we have vaccine available for patients before April, can we give that along with a flu vaccine?**

**A:** It is preferred that patients receive the flu vaccine as soon as possible and providers should not wait to bundle that with a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Q: As a private, affiliated physician, can my staff get vaccinated through NM as well?**

**A:** No, not initially. NM will follow the guidelines and allocation prioritization from the CDC and local public health departments. This guidance may vary from area to area. Updates will be provided when additional information is available. We are aware that some staff within private practices received the invitation to enroll in our vaccine prioritization process because they have NM log-in credentials connected to our electronic health records. While some may have completed the enrollment form, we are currently only scheduling vaccinations for staff, physicians and contractors who are members of the NM workforce.