

# COVID-19 VACCINE



AdvocateAuroraHealth

## Addressing Frequently Asked Questions from Patients

### **How do I get a vaccine? Who's eligible?**

Advocate Aurora Health is using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for a phased vaccination approach. Currently we are vaccinating our patients 65 and older. We are inviting patients by email, text or phone call when it's their turn to schedule their vaccination, based on supplies. We're also inviting eligible health care workers as vaccine supply is available. We look forward to expanding our program to more patients and the broader community as more vaccine supply becomes available.

### **I'm calling because I've been checking the app but can't find open appointment slots. Why are none available?**

We will continue to add vaccine appointments as we receive more vaccine supply. Keep checking the app because it reflects our current appointment availability.

### **Why was my appointment canceled or changed? *Regarding supply delays***

If you're calling with a question about your upcoming vaccination appointment, we have canceled some appointments because we haven't received supply from the state. We will notify patients whose appointments have to be canceled and rescheduled.

### **I'm concerned about missing the window to receive my second dose. What do I do?**

While we know you may have concerns about the timing of your second dose, there is no evidence to support that receiving a delayed second dose hinders the immune response. In fact, the CDC recently updated its guidance to say it's OK if people need to delay their second dose for up to six weeks after their first shot. The first vaccine dose provides significant immunity from COVID-19, and the second dose boosts your immunity even higher. Even if the second dose window goes beyond six weeks, it's important to get the second dose whenever you can to receive the full benefit of the vaccine.

### **Am I going to have to start my series over due to the delays?**

No. The CDC says that even if you are unable to get the second vaccine six weeks after the first, you do not have to start the series over. It's important you get the second dose when you can to get the full benefit of the vaccine.

### **Why was my appointment cancelled? *For callers inappropriately using codes***

While we appreciate your interest in receiving the vaccine, at this time we are only vaccinating our patients who are age 65 and older. We also continue to vaccinate health care workers. Unfortunately, the code you used to schedule was erroneously

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provided to you so we have cancelled your appointment. If you feel you did not receive the code erroneously, please contact the source who provided the code and request a new one. We are reaching out to our patients by phone and email when it's their turn to schedule their vaccination.

## **I tried to schedule an appointment and received a message that my code expired. What can I do?**

Reply to the email that included your code to request a new one. If you can't find the email, contact the organization that provided your original code.

## **Can I join a wait list or walk up at the end of the day?**

There is no wait list or walk-up process. Our vaccination program continues to be informed by CDC guidelines in a phased approach that prioritizes those most vulnerable based on age and health conditions.

Our Advocate Aurora patients will receive a direct communication regarding scheduling of their COVID-19 vaccine. Each eligible patient will receive a unique vaccination code. Once you get your scheduling code, the best way to make an appointment is by regularly checking our LiveWell app. Download the LiveWell app from the App Store or Google Play Store. We look forward to expanding our program to additional patients as more vaccine supply becomes available so that everyone who wants a vaccine to be able to receive one in the coming months. Along with other health providers and business partners, we will expand vaccinations to the broader community in line with these phased guidelines as supplies become available. You can find the latest information at [aah.org/vaccine](http://aah.org/vaccine).

## **Do I have to be a patient of Advocate Aurora Health to get vaccinated there?**

Yes, you will need to be a current patient of Advocate Aurora to get vaccinated at one of our locations. We're also inviting eligible 1A health care workers as vaccine supply is available.

## **How do I know if I am a current patient?**

If you have been seen by an Advocate Aurora provider, filled prescriptions with an Advocate Aurora pharmacy or have been treated at an Advocate Aurora facility in the past 2 years, you are considered a current patient. Individuals who already have an appointment scheduled in the next three months also are considered current patients.

## **Can I request to be seen by providers who are vaccinated against COVID-19?**

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While we are strongly encouraging our team members to get the vaccine, it is not mandatory at this time or required for patient facing care. A significant number of our team members have and continue to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Your health and safety is our highest priority, and with our Safe Care Promise we have taken our extra steps to protect you and our team members with universal masking, social distancing, enhanced cleaning, virtual check-ins and screenings for all who come into our facilities. In addition, our team members undergo daily symptom screenings before they report to work and are equipped with the appropriate personal protective equipment to keep them and our patients safe and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## **I am an Advocate Aurora patient – is it OK if I get the vaccine elsewhere?**

Our patients are not required to get the vaccine at an Advocate Aurora Health facility and may have an opportunity to get it elsewhere sooner. We want everyone to get the vaccine when they are eligible and wherever they can as we believe vaccination will bring an end to this pandemic.

## **I am in the 65+ group but I haven't been contacted.**

We will continue to expand our vaccination program as more supply becomes available. We will contact patients directly by email, text or phone when appointments are available based on vaccine supply. Download the LiveWell app or create a MyAdvocateAurora account so you can quickly make your appointment when it's your turn to get vaccinated. Our goal is for everyone who wants a vaccine to be able to receive one in the coming months.

## **I am an Advocate Aurora patient and a teacher or essential worker in Phase 1B – why can't I schedule?**

Currently, Advocate Aurora Health is providing the COVID-19 vaccine to our patients who are 65 and older. We also continue to vaccinate health care workers. If you are an essential worker – who is not our patient and age 65 or older – we recommend trying to schedule a vaccine appointment through your county health department or another location. As we move through the CDC-guided phases, and as vaccine supplies become available, we'll contact our patients directly via email, phone or text when it's their turn to make an appointment.

## **I am in phase 1a/community health care worker/EMS. Can I get vaccinated with Advocate Aurora Health?**

Health care partners who meet Illinois or Wisconsin criteria for inclusion in phase 1A and are located in Advocate Aurora Health's service area may request

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participation in Advocate Aurora's vaccination program by visiting [aah.org/vaccine-1A](http://aah.org/vaccine-1A).

## **Which vaccine do patients get? (Can I choose which vaccine I get?)**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved emergency use authorization for three COVID-19 vaccines – one by Pfizer/BioNTech, one by Moderna and one by Johnson & Johnson/Janssen. The Pfizer and Moderna require two doses, and patients are scheduled to receive the same vaccine for their first and second dose. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine requires one dose. Our vaccine scheduling is based on available supply, and we are not able to give patients a choice in which vaccine they receive. All vaccines showed to be highly effective and safe in trials, and no serious safety concerns were reported. We encourage our patients to get the first vaccine available to them.

## **Can I choose my vaccine due to ethical concerns? I heard the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was developed, tested and is produced with abortion-derived cell lines.**

Vaccine supply continues to be limited nationally, and our ability to vaccinate our patients is based on whichever vaccine is shipped to us. For that reason, we – like most health care providers – are unable to offer patients a choice of vaccine. We encourage people to get the vaccine that is first available to them as they are all highly safe and effective. Mass vaccination is the way to bring an end to this pandemic. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine does not contain any fetal tissue.

## **Should I get the vaccine if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?**

If you're pregnant or considering becoming pregnant, consult with your provider on the risks and benefits before deciding whether to get the vaccine. At this time, there is no safety data available on the potential risks for pregnant women or fetuses. There are no restrictions for women who are breastfeeding.

## **Does my doctor need to know I want to get vaccinated?**

No, your primary care provider does not need to know or authorize you for the vaccine. However, you can discuss any medical conditions, allergies or other concerns with your doctor if it will help you make your decision about getting vaccinated.

## **What happens if I registered with the local health department? If the health department notifies me that I can get vaccinated, can I go to the hospital to get the vaccine?**

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Please follow the information about where to get your vaccination provided by your local health department.

## **How will Advocate Aurora Health know if I receive the COVID-19 vaccine from a non-Advocate Aurora community clinic or pharmacy?**

When you're vaccinated, the vaccination information is registered with the immunization registry appropriate in your state (i.e., the Wisconsin Immunization Registry, also called WIR, or I-CARE, the Illinois Comprehensive Automated Immunization Registry Exchange). This allows health care providers, pharmacies and other administering organizations access to a central record of vaccinations. In addition, you should receive a vaccination card or printout that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it and where you received it.

## **How much does the vaccine cost?**

Government funds will be used to give the vaccine at no cost to the public. Administrative fees may be subject to insurance but there will be no out-of-pocket costs for our patients.

## **What should I do if I test positive for COVID-19 before my second dose?**

Advocate Aurora Health recommends you still get the COVID-19 vaccine, but if you're not cleared by your treating provider to enter an Advocate Aurora facility due to symptoms and/or timing of the positive test in time for your appointment, cancel it and contact your primary care provider.

## **I am a patient who received my first dose with another health care organization or in another state; how can I schedule just a second dose?**

Like all health care organizations, the state has only allocated us enough second doses for those who have received their first dose from Advocate Aurora Health. If you did not receive your first dose with Advocate Aurora Health, you will need to receive the second dose at the same location that you received your first dose. If that's not possible, contact your local health department for alternative locations.

## **I got my first dose of the vaccine from Advocate Aurora. Can I get my second dose at a different location?**

If you received your first dose with Advocate Aurora, you'll need to get your second dose at the same Advocate Aurora location.

## **What are the national guidelines on who can get the vaccine now, and in what order will people be eligible for the vaccine? Can you explain what 1a, 1b, 1c, etc. mean?**

Based on national and local recommendations, health care personnel and residents

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of long-term care facilities have been offered the first doses of COVID-19 vaccines. (Phase 1a)

The next group to be vaccinated are those 65 and older and essential workers. (Phase 1b)

As vaccine availability increases, vaccination recommendations will expand to include more groups. Each state makes its own vaccination plan based on national and CDC recommendations. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as large enough quantities of vaccine are available.

## **If someone has health issues, can they get vaccinated sooner? How are people going to be prioritized? Will the elderly get it sooner than younger people?**

The national and state recommendations take these concerns into consideration.

## **Can Advocate Aurora patients receive the COVID-19 vaccine while hospitalized?**

At this time, we are not vaccinating inpatients but we are continually evaluating our approach to best meet the needs of our patients and communities. For patients who are hospitalized between doses, we recommend they get their second dose once they are discharged.

## **Can I get a mammogram after getting vaccinated?**

Yes. If it's time for your regular screening mammogram, we recommend getting it before your first vaccine dose or four weeks after your second dose. A possible vaccine side effect is temporarily enlarged lymph nodes, which can appear on your mammogram and may prompt the need for additional imaging. However, if you've already scheduled your screening mammogram or screening ultrasound, please keep your appointment. When you arrive, let the technologist know when you were vaccinated and in which arm you got your shot. If you have new symptoms such as a lump, nipple discharge or skin changes, contact your provider to discuss scheduling a diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound.

## **Is the vaccine available for children?**

International studies are underway to determine if the COVID-19 vaccines are safe for children. The research is expected to take several months to complete. Until the vaccine is approved for use in children, we will not immunize them. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for ages 16 and above and those teens will be able to get that vaccine. But, it will be some time before that age group is prioritized by the CDC for immunization. We encourage parents to continue to use safe practices such as



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handwashing, masking, social distancing. We also recommend that all adults in a household with children get the vaccines.

## **What is happening to the unused vaccine at the end of the day?**

We are prioritizing our patients based on age and risk factors, and we're also committed to ensuring no vaccine goes to waste. There is no waiting list or walk-in option to receive a vaccine at this time.

## **Should I get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?**

It's recommended that people who have previously had COVID-19 receive the vaccine. However, if you are still contagious from the infection then you should delay your vaccine appointment until you are no longer contagious. You should contact your healthcare provider if you are unsure about being contagious.

## **I've been fully vaccinated and am now experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Can I be seen in person at my physician's office?**

No. Patients who have COVID-19 symptoms should not come to in-person visits regardless of vaccination status. If there is any doubt about the nature of the symptoms, a virtual visit should be sought, and then further direction can be provided based on the outcome of that visit. COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## **How do vaccinations work for residents of the City of Chicago?**

Chicago residents should schedule their vaccine at one of our Chicago locations *[Note: If team members scheduling appointments for patients see a Chicago address, they should schedule them at Masonic or Trinity. However, if a patient who lives in the city wants to schedule elsewhere, we can accommodate that.]*