



## CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19: Learn how to protect yourself and get care

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### COVID-19 vaccine — what employers need to know

After many long months of the COVID-19 pandemic, we now have COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines will be a vital tool for controlling and eventually ending this pandemic that has caused so much loss, pain, and disruption around the world. This next essential step in the fight against COVID-19 will take time — but things are moving in the right direction.



The race to create a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine



and daily life — we simply couldn't wait that long. There are several factors that have helped expedite the development of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, and get it to market as soon as possible:

- The federal government allocated unprecedented funding for vaccine development — \$10 billion and counting.<sup>1</sup>
- Sequencing was used to identify the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) early in the pandemic.
- A brand-new vaccine technology was ready to meet this challenge just as the coronavirus emerged.
- Clinical trial phases have been shortened, and in many cases, they're occurring simultaneously. And the high number of COVID-19 cases meant scientists could see evidence that the vaccines were working early on.
- Some vaccine companies were incentivized to start manufacturing vaccines in advance, so they'd be ready to distribute as soon as they're approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

## Current and upcoming COVID-19 vaccines

There are several COVID-19 vaccines in various stages of development and approval. Both Pfizer and Moderna have been granted emergency use authorizations by the FDA for their COVID-19 vaccines. While it will take some time for approved vaccines to become widely available, this is excellent news — and a big step forward in the fight against the coronavirus.

- Clinical trials for both vaccines have shown over 94% effectiveness in preventing COVID-19.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Side effects, which are common for most vaccines, are minimal. Some people who've participated in clinical trials have reported fevers, fatigue, muscle aches, and soreness around injection sites. These are all normal signs that the body is building immunity.



#### Federal government

- Reviewing the research and approving vaccines for use
- Providing ongoing oversight over vaccine production
- Ensuring the appropriate safety and reporting measures are in place
- Providing guidance and requirements for how the vaccine is administered

#### State government

- Enrolling providers into immunization programs and enforcing requirements
- Identifying critical populations and assisting with allocation decisions
- Selecting vaccine administration sites and managing provider orders
- Conducting ongoing assessments to ensure data is reported to the CDC

#### Kaiser Permanente

- Developing a holistic, organized approach to administering COVID-19 vaccines
- Preparing our providers to deliver vaccines safely and effectively
- Participating in national vaccine monitoring programs to track adverse reactions and other safety and effectiveness measures

## COVID-19 vaccine availability

As soon as COVID-19 vaccines get cleared for emergency use, states receive limited quantities and begin making them available to approved vaccine providers. Kaiser Permanente has been approved to be a vaccine provider in every market where we operate. However, the reality is that there will not be enough doses immediately available for everyone who wants the vaccine. Supplies will increase over time, and all adults should be able to get vaccinated later in 2021.

### COVID-19 vaccine distribution phases

- Phase 1** Limited doses mean distribution will be tightly regulated. Providers must request approval from the state, and doses will only be available for critical-risk populations.
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- Phase 2** The vaccine will be more widely available at doctor's offices as well as retail pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals. There will continue to be a focus on the populations most at risk.
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- Phase 3** Similar to how we experience flu vaccines today – with easy access for anyone who is interested in it.

## Who gets vaccinated first, and who decides?

While more doses are being produced to meet the demand, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has identified high-risk, high-priority groups who will receive vaccines first — but ultimately, states and counties will determine who gets the vaccine and when.





transmitting COVID-19 to patients

- Residents of long-term care facilities — because they represent 40% of COVID-19 deaths<sup>5</sup>
- **Phase 1b — approximately 51 million people:**<sup>6</sup>
  - People age 75 years and older
  - Essential frontline workers
- **Phase 1c — approximately 199 million people:**<sup>7</sup>
  - People ages 65 to 74
  - People ages 16 to 64 with high-risk health conditions
  - Other essential workers

The groups of people eligible to receive the vaccine will continue to expand as more vaccine doses become available.

## Accessing the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1a

The vaccine is currently only available to individuals in Phase 1a. Those who are eligible can get the vaccine from any provider that has been approved as a COVID-19 vaccine distributor by their state's department of health.





- [California](#) ↗
- [Colorado](#) ↗
- [District of Columbia](#) ↗
- [Georgia](#) ↗
- [Hawaii](#) ↗
- [Maryland](#) ↗
- [Oregon](#) ↗
- [Virginia](#) ↗
- [Washington](#) ↗

Individuals who believe they're eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1a should visit [kp.org/covidvaccine](https://kp.org/covidvaccine) ↗ for information on how to schedule a vaccine appointment. Due to limited quantities of vaccines from public health authorities in each county, there are a limited number of vaccine appointments available.

## It's essential to keep taking steps to slow the spread of COVID-19

While vaccines will be vital to ending the pandemic, it will take several months to achieve widespread vaccination. And with COVID-19 numbers higher than ever, public health measures are still the best way to protect yourself, your employees, and our communities against the coronavirus. So keep wearing your mask, staying 6 feet apart, washing your hands, and staying home when you can — and encouraging your employees to do the same.

**Vaccines are only part of the solution. Keep taking these steps to protect against COVID-19.**

**Encourage – and model – these healthy behaviors to help keep your employees safe.**



**Wear a mask**



**Wash your hands**



**Stay 6 feet apart**



**Avoid crowds**



**Get a flu shot**

## Employers' top COVID-19 FAQs



that have been approved as a COVID-19 vaccine provider by the state department of health.

**Will there be a cost to Kaiser Permanente members for the COVID-19 vaccine?**


No. Kaiser Permanente won't charge members for the vaccine. Vaccine doses purchased with taxpayer dollars are required by the federal government to be given at no cost.

**Will there be a cost to employers for the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Vaccine doses purchased with taxpayer dollars under Operation Warp Speed are required by the federal government to be given at no cost and for these vaccine doses, there will be no costs passed on to employers. Where applicable, claims for administering the vaccine to individuals will accumulate to an employer's utilization and could impact future renewal rates.

Want more information about the COVID-19 vaccine?



Visit our [member FAQ](#)  to see the latest vaccine updates we've shared with your employees on [kp.org](#).



## For information about Kaiser Permanente health plans

### Contact

<sup>1</sup>"Fact Sheet: Explaining Operation Warp Speed, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [hhs.gov/coronavirus](https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus), accessed December 17, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>"Pfizer and BioNTech Conclude Phase 3 Study of COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate, Meeting all Primary Efficacy Endpoints," Pfizer press release, November 18, 2020.

<sup>3</sup>"Moderna Announces Primary Efficacy Analysis in Phase 3 COVE Study for Its COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate and Filing Today with U.S. FDA for Emergency Use Authorization," Moderna press release, November 30, 2020.

<sup>4</sup>Kathleen Dooling, MD, et al., "Phased Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccines," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 1, 2020.

<sup>5</sup>Priya Chidambaram, et al., "COVID-19 Has Claimed the Lives of 100,000 Long-Term Care Residents and Staff," Kaiser Family Foundation, November 25, 2020.

<sup>6</sup>Kathleen Dooling, MD, et al., "Phased Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccines," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 20, 2020.

<sup>7</sup>See note 6.





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