



COVID-19

How CDC Is Making COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations

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When the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorizes or approves a COVID-19 vaccine, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will quickly hold a public meeting to review all available data about that vaccine (sign up to receive email updates whenever [ACIP's Meeting Information](#) is updated). ACIP is an independent panel of medical and public health experts. Before making recommendations, ACIP reviews all available clinical trial information, including descriptions of:

- Who received the vaccine (age, race, ethnicity, [underlying medical conditions](#))
- How different groups responded to the vaccine
- What side effects people had

From these data, ACIP will then vote on whether to recommend the vaccine. While vaccine supplies were limited, ACIP also voted on recommendations for [who should be offered COVID-19 vaccine first](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations

- On Dec. 1, 2020, ACIP [recommended](#) that healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents be offered COVID-19 vaccination first (Phase 1a).
- On Dec. 11, 2020, FDA issued an [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) [↗](#) in people aged 16 years and older, and on Dec. 13, 2020, [ACIP issued recommendations for the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19.
- On Dec. 18, 2020, FDA issued an [EUA for the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) [↗](#) for use in people aged 18 years and older, and on Dec. 20, 2020, [ACIP issued recommendations for the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19.
- On Dec. 20, 2020, ACIP updated interim vaccine allocation [recommendations](#). In Phase 1b, COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to people aged 75 years and older and non-healthcare frontline essential workers, and in Phase 1c, to people aged 65–74 years, people aged 16–64 years with high-risk medical

conditions, and essential workers not included in Phase 1b.

- On Feb. 27, 2021, FDA issued an EUA for the use of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine in people aged 18 years and older, and on Mar. 2, 2021, [ACIP issued recommendations for the use of the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19.

Learn more about [ACIP and CDC recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines](#).



ACIP resources: [Recommendation process](#), [meeting agendas](#), [minutes](#), [live meetings](#), and [presentation slides](#)

Ethical principles





ACIP identified four ethical principles to guide their decision-making process when supply is limited:


- **Maximize benefits and minimize harms** — Respect and care for people using the best available data to promote public health and minimize death and severe illness.
- **Mitigate health inequities** — Reduce health disparities in the burden of COVID-19 disease and death, and make sure everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.
- **Promote justice** — Treat affected groups, populations, and communities fairly. Remove unfair, unjust, and avoidable barriers to COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Promote transparency** — Make a decision that is clear, understandable, and open for review. Allow and seek public participation in the creation and review of the decision processes.

Learn more about [ACIP's Ethical Principles for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine](#).

Other frameworks

Input from the public and the following professional groups is informing ACIP's discussions on who should receive COVID-19 vaccines when supply is limited:

- **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health:** [Interim Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation and Distribution in the United States](#) 
- **The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine:** [Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine](#) 
- **World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE):** [WHO SAGE Values Framework for the Allocation and Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccination](#)  

- **WHO SAGE:** [WHO SAGE Roadmap for Prioritizing Uses of COVID-19 Vaccines in the Context of Limited Supply](#)  

ACIP's Role

Learn about [CDC's vaccine recommendation process](#)

Vaccine Rollout Recommendations

When the U.S. supply of COVID-19 vaccine was limited, CDC provided recommendations to federal, state, and local governments about who should be vaccinated first. CDC's recommendations were based on those from ACIP.

The [recommendations](#) were made with these goals in mind:

- Decrease death and serious disease as much as possible.
- Preserve functioning of society.
- Reduce the extra burden COVID-19 had on people already facing disparities.

While CDC made recommendations for who should be offered COVID-19 vaccine first, each state had its own plan for deciding who would be vaccinated first and how they could receive vaccines.

On April 19, 2021, as COVID-19 vaccines became more widely accessible, vaccine eligibility expanded to everyone in the U.S. aged 16 years and older.

More Information

[Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#)

[COVID-19 ACIP Vaccine Recommendations](#)

[Role of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices in CDC's Vaccine Recommendations](#)

[When Vaccine is Limited, Who Gets Vaccinated First](#)

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)