



COVID-19

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How CDC Is Making COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations

Updated Dec. 23, 2020

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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). From these data, ACIP will then vote on whether to recommend the vaccine and, if so, who should receive it.

ACIP's role

[CDC's vaccine recommendation process](#)

- On December 1, 2020, ACIP [recommended](#) that health care personnel and residents of long-term care facilities be offered COVID-19 vaccine in the initial phase of the vaccination program.
- On December 11, 2020, the FDA issued an [Emergency Use Authorization for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) in persons aged 16 years and older for the prevention of COVID-19.
- On December 13, 2020, the [ACIP issued recommendations for the use of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19.
- On December 18, 2020, the FDA issued an [Emergency Use Authorization for the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) for use in individuals 18 years of age and older.
- On December 20, 2020, [ACIP issued recommendations for the use of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19.
- On December 20, 2020, ACIP updated interim vaccine allocation [recommendations](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations to Date

December 1, 2020

Vaccination in the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program (Phase 1a) should be offered to both 1) healthcare personnel and 2) residents of long-term care facilities.

Healthcare personnel are defined as paid and unpaid people serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. Long-term care facility residents are defined as adults who reside in facilities that provide a variety of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently.

Read more in CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) and [clinical considerations](#) for further sub-prioritization within these groups as needed.



ACIP Resources: [Meeting agendas, minutes, live meetings, and presentation slides](#)

Since the pandemic began, ACIP has been holding special meetings to review U.S. data on COVID-19 and the vaccines in development to help prevent it. Before making recommendations, ACIP plans to review all available clinical trial information, including descriptions of

- Who is receiving each candidate vaccine (age, race, ethnicity, underlying medical conditions)
- How different groups respond to the vaccine
- Side effects experienced

Goals for vaccination if supply is limited

ACIP set the following goals for recommending which groups should receive COVID-19 vaccines if supply is limited:

- Decrease death and serious disease as much as possible
- Preserve functioning of society
- Reduce the extra burden the disease is having on people already facing disparities

Ethical principles

ACIP identified four ethical principles to guide their decision-making process if 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](#).

Groups considered for early vaccination if supply is limited

Before making an official recommendation, ACIP considered four groups to possibly recommend for early COVID-19 vaccination if supply is limited:

- Healthcare personnel
- Workers in essential and critical industries
- People at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions
- People 65 years and older

Healthcare personnel continue to be on the front line of the nation's fight against this deadly pandemic. By providing care to those who are or might be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, many healthcare personnel have a high risk of being exposed to and getting sick with COVID-19. Learn more [about the importance of vaccination for healthcare personnel](#).

Workers in essential and critical industries are considered part of America's critical infrastructure, as defined by the [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency](#). Current data show that many of these workers are at increased risk for getting COVID-19. Early vaccine access is critical not only to protect them but also to maintain the essential services they provide U.S. communities.

People with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, regardless of their age. Severe illness means that the person with COVID-19 may require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe, or that they may even die. Early vaccine access is critical to ensuring the health and safety of this population that is disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Among adults, the risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk. Early vaccine access is critical to help protect this population that is disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Other frameworks

Input from the public and the following professional groups is informing ACIP's discussions on who should receive COVID-19 vaccines if 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** ↗ ↗

More Information

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 2020

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Ethical Principles for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, 2020

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

Role of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices in CDC's Vaccine Recommendations

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