

# COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

## Priority Populations and Vaccine Distribution

Ohio has started distributing safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines statewide to those who choose to be vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccine development process included steps comparable with those used to develop previous vaccines, such as the flu or measles vaccine. Immediately after the COVID-19 vaccines obtained emergency use authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the state began strategically and thoughtfully distributing the vaccines to Ohioans most at risk. This distribution is being guided by recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).

### Ohio's Phased Approach

Ohio's goals are clear: to save lives and get students back in schools. While vaccine supply is limited, Ohio will follow a phased approach to vaccine administration. In the first vaccination phase, priority will be given to individuals at the highest risk, as well as essential healthcare workers and personnel caring for COVID-19 patients. The speed at which Ohio will move through the phases is largely dependent upon the number of vaccine doses available. As supply increases, COVID-19 vaccines will be available to all Ohioans who choose to be vaccinated.

- **Phase 1 (Supply Limited)** – Vaccine is available in limited supply and will be available only for specific critical populations. Ohio will focus on vaccinating those most at risk, as well as essential healthcare workers and personnel caring for COVID-19 patients.
- **Phase 2 (Supply Increasing)** – Vaccine availability is increasing and can be offered to a larger group of specific critical populations who choose to be vaccinated.
- **Phases 3-4 (Widely Available)** – Once the vaccine is widely available, Ohio will continue to strategically vaccinate Ohioans if they choose to receive vaccine.

### Phase 1A

During Phase 1A, which began December 14, 2020, priority was given to vulnerable individuals who live in close proximity and those who care for them:

- Healthcare workers and personnel who are routinely involved in the care of COVID-19 patients.
- Residents and staff in nursing homes.
- Residents and staff in assisted living facilities.
- Patients and staff at state psychiatric hospitals.
- People with developmental disabilities and those with mental health disorders, including substance use disorders, who live in group homes, residential facilities, or centers, and staff at those locations.
- Residents and staff at our two state-run homes for Ohio veterans.
- EMS responders.

### Phase 1B

During Phase 1B, the focus will continue to offer protection to those at high risk and have K-12 students back in the classroom by March 1. This phase will specifically include:

- Ohioans, age 65 and up.
- Ohioans born with or who have early childhood conditions that are carried into adulthood, which put them at a higher risk for adverse outcomes due to COVID-19.
  - Sickle cell anemia.
  - Down syndrome.
  - Cystic fibrosis.

- Muscular dystrophy.
- Cerebral palsy.
- Spina bifida.
- People born with severe heart defects, requiring regular specialized medical care.
- People with severe type 1 diabetes, who have been hospitalized for this in the past year.
- Phenylketonuria (PKU), Tay-Sachs, and other rare, inherited metabolic disorders.
- Epilepsy with continuing seizures; hydrocephaly; microcephaly, and other severe neurological disorders.
- Turner syndrome, fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and other severe genetic disorders.
- People with severe asthma, who have been hospitalized for this in the past year.
- Alpha and beta thalassemia
- Solid organ transplant candidates and recipients.
- Adults/employees in K-12 schools that want to go back to, or to remain with, in-person or hybrid learning models.

Vaccinations in Phase 1B began the week of January 19. Governor DeWine announced a tiered system for offering vaccinations to the estimated 2.2 million people who are eligible for the vaccine under this phase, beginning with those who are 80 or older. When a new age group begins, vaccinations may not be complete for the previous age group. It will take a number of weeks to distribute all of the vaccine given the limited doses available.

- Jan. 19, 2021 – Ohioans 80 years of age and older.
- Jan. 25, 2021 –
  - Ohioans 75 years of age and older.
  - Those with a developmental or intellectual disability **AND** one of the conditions listed above.

***If you believe you fall into this category:***

- County boards of developmental disabilities will reach out to you to coordinate vaccination if you are already receiving services from the board and it knows that you qualify.
- If you have not been contacted, or if you do not receive services through a board of developmental disabilities, you must reach out to the board in your county to coordinate your vaccination. A directory of county boards can be found [here](#).
- The board will work with a children’s hospital or a local health department to schedule your vaccination appointment.
- Vaccinations will only be given at local health departments or participating children’s hospitals in conjunction with the local boards. **Do not go to your local pharmacy for scheduling or vaccination.**
- Feb. 1, 2021 – Ohioans 70 years of age and older; employees of K-12 schools that wish to remain or return to in-person or hybrid models.
- Feb. 8, 2021 – Ohioans 65 years of age and older.
- Feb. 15, 2021 – Ohioans born with or who have specific early childhood conditions that are carried into adulthood, which put them at a higher risk for adverse outcomes due to COVID-19, listed above.
  - **Ohioans with one of the above qualifying medical conditions may choose to receive the vaccine at the provider of their choice, but will be asked by their vaccine provider to verify that they are, in fact, eligible at this time.**

Vaccine recipients must be age 16 or older to be eligible for the Pfizer vaccine, and age 18 or older to be eligible for the Moderna vaccine.

**How To Find a Vaccine Provider**

Ohioans should check the websites of their local health departments and EMAs to learn more about vaccinations in their community or to sign up to receive updates from the local health department. Groups defined by age will receive the vaccine from local health departments, hospitals, federally-qualified health centers, as well as some retail pharmacies. Providers for other audiences are yet to be announced. A statewide Vaccine Provider Locations search is available at [vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov), allowing Ohioans to search by county, and ZIP code to find a provider in their area to administer the vaccine.

**Future Phases**

The vaccine distribution plan for future priority populations is still under development and will be shared publicly once finalized. As more information becomes available on who can receive the vaccine and when they can receive the vaccine, we will communicate this information publicly through the news media and share information at [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](http://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine).

The vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19 and to decrease the severity of illness in people who catch the virus that causes the disease. Vaccinating a significant portion of Ohioans will help prevent serious hospitalizations and deaths.

Using all the tools available to help prevent the spread of the virus continues to be critical until a substantial number of Ohioans can be vaccinated. Continuing to wear masks that cover the mouth and nose, and social distance will reduce your chance of being exposed to or spreading the virus.

Proper prevention measures, coupled with the vaccine will provide the best protection from COVID-19.

*Updated Feb. 11, 2021.*

For additional information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

**Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.**

For more information, visit: [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)