

COVID-19: Employee Vaccine FAQs

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We want to acknowledge and thank all our employees and physicians who are continuing to work tirelessly to care for our patients during the current COVID-19 surge. The news about vaccines is very promising. To help end this pandemic and to protect our staff, patients, families and communities, we are encouraging everyone to get vaccinated when they meet the criteria to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and supplies are available.

When it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine, Kaiser Permanente is guided by 3 principles:

Safety — We will administer vaccines that meet rigorous clinical standards for safety and effectiveness.

Equity — We will administer vaccines equitably, to maximize access to all populations as identified and prioritized by federal guidelines.

Importance — We will promote the importance of vaccines in slowing the spread of COVID-19, while emphasizing that vaccines alone will not stop the spread of the virus.

Kaiser Permanente is working in partnership with state and local public health departments to vaccinate people as quickly as possible as supplies allow.

What are the priority groups for vaccinating Kaiser Permanente employees?

Supplies will at first be limited to people determined to be at greatest risk, so not everyone will be able to get vaccinated immediately. The vaccine will be distributed in phases. The phases are based on federal, state, and local public health guidelines and reflect guidance from Kaiser Permanente's experts in infectious diseases and clinical ethics. The following is subject to change, based on vaccine supplies, and evolving public health recommendations:

The first group of employees to be eligible for vaccination will include:

- Workers involved in direct patient care or in high-risk exposure procedures with confirmed/suspected COVID-19 patients, including workers in long-term care facilities.
- Workers exposed to or handling specimens from patients who have COVID-19
- Workers with higher risk of getting severe COVID-19 and/or who care for populations at greater risk of death or severe illness from COVID-19
- Workers administering vaccines for people in initial vaccination groups
- Additional frontline workers at highest risk of exposure to patients with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 via high public exposure and procedures

How will Kaiser Permanente employees and physicians get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Employees and physicians will be able to receive their vaccine from any COVID-19 vaccine provider approved by their state. It is likely going to be most convenient to get your vaccination on-site at Kaiser Permanente.

Are employees and physicians required to get the vaccine?

Vaccination for KP employees and physicians is strongly encouraged but not required.

Will I be notified about how and where to get a vaccine?

If your role is included in the initial prioritization, you will be contacted by your local manager, supervisor, or vaccine scheduling team with details about when and where you can go to get vaccinated.

What role will unions play in informing represented employees about Kaiser Permanente's plans for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Because states are coordinating distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, regional labor relations directors and operational leads are engaging union leaders in each Kaiser Permanente market to discuss the vaccination process and plans for administering the vaccine to eligible represented employees.

Multiple vaccines are in development, and Kaiser Permanente may offer more than one. Will Kaiser Permanente employees be able to choose which drug manufacturer's vaccine they will receive?

Due to limited supplies, there will not be an opportunity to choose among available vaccines. KP will distribute vaccines according to the guidance from public health authorities based on the supply available to us.

When employees receive the vaccine, will it be given in 1 dose or 2?

COVID-19 vaccines will be given in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines for each vaccine. Most of the vaccines currently in clinical trials require 2 shots, which are given a few weeks apart. The first shot does not provide full protection from COVID-19 — it primes the immune system, helping it recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response.

When you receive your vaccine, you'll be given a card that describes the brand of vaccine. If the vaccine requires 2 doses, your card will show the date for receiving your second dose. It's important that your second dose is the same brand of vaccine you received the first time, as the vaccines are not interchangeable.

If you receive your vaccine at KP, we'll be tracking your doses to ensure you get the right one at the right time.

Are contractors working at Kaiser Permanente facilities eligible to get vaccinated at their work location?

The CDC and state health officials require approved vaccine providers such as Kaiser Permanente to make the vaccine available to anyone who meets the criteria for each phase of prioritization in the vaccine distribution process. However, we don't yet know how each state (or county) may approach this process.

Can employees continue to work if they don't want the vaccine?

At this time, you can continue to work if you decide not to get the vaccine. You should continue to follow CDC guidelines to keep others and yourself safe, including wearing a mask, regularly washing your hands, and maintaining physical distancing of at least 6 feet.

Can employees return to the workplace after getting vaccinated?

Employees who are required to report to a Kaiser Permanente facility can return to work, and must continue to do their symptom self-check prior to entering a KP facility. Some people experience side effects following the vaccine; these are generally tolerable and are a sign of the

body's immune response. As usual, you should stay home if you experience flu-like symptoms, especially fever.

Employees currently part of Temporary Remote Work program should continue working from home until further notification from their manager or a Kaiser Permanente leader.

Will employees receive paid time off to be vaccinated?

No. We are working to make getting vaccinated onsite at Kaiser Permanente easy and convenient so you can be vaccinated before or after work or while on break. Employees can also get vaccinated by any COVID-19 vaccine provider approved by their state.

If an employee experiences side effects after receiving the vaccine, will he or she be able to take time off and/or take advantage of the COVID-19 paid leave hours benefits?

In general, the side effects reported from the trials are mild or moderate fatigue, headache, muscle aches, site reactions, and/or mild fever. These are typical side effects for vaccines. The side effects people experience after getting a vaccine are generally tolerable and are a sign of the body's immune response. If you need to take time off, you can use your accrued paid time off hours. You are not eligible to use the COVID-19 temporary benefits for vaccine side effects.

Once vaccinated, do employees need to perform the daily symptom self-check prior to going to work?

All employees, physicians, and contractors must continue to do their symptom self-check prior to entering a KP facility or work location and swipe their badge at an available card reader to attest. If you are required to enter one of our facilities/locations and you have not yet received your badge sticker from your manager, be prepared to either (1) show proof of your training completion in the form of a printout or screenshot, or by accessing KP Learn on your phone or (2) use the visitor health screening protocol to enter that location.

The badge sticker serves as a reminder to conduct a symptom self-check prior to entering a KP facility or work location. The sticker also provides a visual verification to managers that their direct reports have completed the training and are contributing to maintaining a healthy workplace.

Do I still need to wear a mask at work if I've received a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Face masks should still be worn in addition to following physical distancing guidelines and safety protocols provided by your facility and department while at work.

When will we be able to stop wearing masks?

We will continue to follow CDC mask guidance. People should continue to wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread COVID-19. It will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, such as covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, staying at least 6 feet away from others and other social distancing measures.

Will there be any required attestation or proof of vaccination for Kaiser Permanente employees and contractors?

Not at this time, as the vaccine is not mandatory.

When you receive your vaccine, you'll be given a card that describes the brand of vaccine. If the vaccine requires 2 doses, your card will show the date for receiving your second dose.

It's important that your second dose is the same brand of vaccine you received the first time as the vaccines are not interchangeable.

How were the COVID-19 vaccines developed so quickly? Are they safe?

Recognizing the urgent need for safe and effective vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food and Drug Administration is using its various authorities and expertise to speed the development and availability of vaccines that have met the agency's standards for quality, safety, and effectiveness. In this case, the scientific community built on previous vaccine research, including new methods of developing vaccines. In addition, due to the pandemic's high infection rates, the pace of clinical trials — usually the longest part of the process — was accelerated. Also, the federal government has invested significantly in the necessary manufacturing capacity to support companies as they aggressively pursue rapid development and distribution of eventual vaccines.

Will Kaiser Permanente evaluate the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine?

Our infectious disease and other clinical experts are reviewing the safety and efficacy data in collaboration with state and federal health officials, with whom we are in close contact, to ensure we are prepared to administer each vaccine safely and equitably.

Is there a chance of getting COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, the vaccine can't give you COVID-19 and will not make you infectious to others. Typically, the side effects people experience after getting a vaccine are tolerable and are a sign of the body's immune response.

What vaccine is likely to be available for the first vaccinations in the United States?

The FDA issued emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech.

How effective is the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine according to results of the clinical trials?

The data submitted by Pfizer and BioNTech to the FDA indicates that the vaccine is 95 percent effective at preventing COVID-19.

How many people have received the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in the clinical trials?

The study is being conducted in the United States, Turkey, Germany, South Africa, Brazil and Argentina. A total of 43,651 participants have been included in the clinical trials. Of these, 21,823 received the vaccine and 21,828 received a placebo — or dummy — vaccine. Like all vaccine clinical trials, this study is designed to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions. Pfizer reported that of 170 infections that occurred in the study, only 8 occurred in the group that got the vaccine, and only one was a severe case.

What are the potential side effects of this vaccine?

Like most regularly recommended vaccines, the ones for COVID-19, which will be administered in 2 doses a few weeks apart, can produce side effects. Some people who participated in clinical trials have reported soreness around injection sites, fevers, headaches, fatigue, and muscle aches. These symptoms are an expected sign that the body is building immunity. The most frequent side effects reported by participants in the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine study include injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever. These side effects were usually mild or moderate and resolved within a few days after vaccine administration.

Does the vaccine use a live or a dead virus?

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

Are there any potential security issues for staff when KP receives the COVID-19 vaccine?

Kaiser Permanente National Security Services (NSS) is partnering with the Department of Homeland Security to develop an enterprise COVID-19 vaccine security plan to ensure Kaiser Permanente aligns with all recommended guidance and guidelines for safeguarding staff, patients, and COVID-19 vaccine allotments. As part of our preparations, NSS is assessing all COVID-19 vaccine storage locations for providing adequate and physical protection. Additionally, NSS is working with Pharmacy and medical group leadership to address security requirements related to vaccine movement within facilities, as well as at the vaccination locations. KP is confident all locations where the COVID-19 vaccine is stored and administered will be safe and secure.

What should staff members do if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable if members or the public shows up at a KP facility demanding the vaccine (but can't get it due to criteria or availability)?

Although we don't anticipate significant issues, KP National Security Services (NSS) will maintain a presence at identified locations where COVID-19 vaccines will be administered to patients.

Where can employees go for the latest COVID-19 vaccine information?

Employees can visit [insideKP](#) or call Kaiser Permanente's national COVID-19 hotline, available 24/7 in English and Spanish at **855-550-0951** for the latest vaccine information. Please feel free to share this number broadly — it's available to both members and nonmembers.