



from
AMVETS Dept. of Florida

Legislative Officer

Good Morning AMVETS,
Important info on Covid19 for Vets.

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Who will get a COVID-19 vaccine first

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the first COVID-19 vaccine. We'll have a limited amount of this vaccine to start.

We've worked with the CDC and other federal partners to develop a phased plan. Our goal is to do the most good for the most people during this time.

Under this plan, we'll first offer vaccines to these 2 groups:

- Veterans living in our long-term care facilities, **and**

- VA health care personnel. Vaccinating our high-risk VA health care personnel helps us continue providing care for Veterans.

We based this plan on these criteria from CDC guidelines:

- Risk of becoming infected with the virus
- Risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19
- Risk of spreading the virus to others
- Risk of harm to society if essential workers, including health care personnel, are unable to work

After the first 2 groups, we'll begin to offer vaccines to more Veterans who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Your VA health care team will contact you if you're eligible to get a vaccine during this time.

Who is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19

We'll follow CDC guidelines for determining who is at high risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Factors that may influence the risk of severe illness include the following:

- **Age.** The risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 increases with age.
- **Existing health problems.** People with certain health problems (like diabetes, heart disease, or obesity) have a higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.
- **Other factors** that raise a person's risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19, such as living in a nursing home or other group living facility.

To learn more about people at increased risk, [go to the CDC website](#).

Basic information about getting your vaccine at VA

As the supply of vaccine increases, we'll work with our care teams to let Veterans know their options.

Where we'll offer vaccines

The first authorized COVID-19 vaccine requires special storage and handling. Because of this, we'll start by offering vaccines through certain VA medical centers.

When more vaccines are available, we'll determine if we can provide vaccines through our community provider network.

Eligibility and cost

When more vaccines become available, we plan to offer a free COVID-19 vaccine to all Veterans receiving VA health care who want one.

Your team will contact you when a vaccine is available to you. If you decide to get the vaccine, your team will help you schedule your appointments.

If you're not currently receiving health care through VA, you can [apply now](#).

Safety

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make a COVID-19 vaccine available.

We'll closely monitor everyone who gets a COVID-19 vaccine for reactions, side effects, or adverse events. An adverse event is an injury or harm that happens to someone after they receive a vaccine, which may or may not have been caused by the vaccine.

We'll report this information in our vaccine monitoring and tracking system. This is the same system we use to monitor reactions to all vaccines, including those for the flu and shingles.

Privacy

We'll share the same information with the CDC that we share for other vaccines. This includes the following information:

- Demographic information (like age, gender, race, and ethnicity) that helps the CDC understand which groups of people are receiving the vaccine
- Adverse reactions to the vaccine

We will not share names or street addresses.

Questions you may have about COVID-19 vaccines

The vaccine authorization process

- Is there a cure or any FDA-approved treatments for COVID-19?
- Is there an FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine?
- What is the FDA's role in approving a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19?

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine

- Why do I need a COVID-19 vaccine?
- How do vaccines for viruses like the coronavirus protect me from getting sick?
- How will getting a vaccine benefit my family and community?
- Can I get the vaccine even if I've already had COVID-19?
- Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?
- If the FDA authorizes more than one COVID-19 vaccine, will I be able to choose which one I receive?
- Can I receive the COVID-19 and flu vaccines at the same time? If not, how long do I have to wait between vaccines?
- Can I change my mind after scheduling a time to get a vaccine?
- How many doses of a COVID-19 vaccine will I need to take? Will I need a booster dose?

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine

- Can I still get COVID-19 after I receive the vaccine?
- How long will the vaccine protect me from COVID-19?
- If I get the COVID-19 vaccine, can I stop wearing a mask in VA facilities?

For answers to more frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines, [go to the CDC website](#).

More helpful information and resources

- **Coronavirus FAQs: What Veterans need to know**

Get the latest updates on how the COVID-19 pandemic may affect your VA benefits and services.

- **Find VA locations**

Visit your local VA medical center website to learn more about COVID-19 vaccine preparation.

- **VA's COVID-19 public health response**

Read more about our public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Volunteer for coronavirus research at VA**

As one of the nation's leaders in health research, we're working to continue to find ways to prevent and treat COVID-19. Find out how you can be part of these efforts and what to expect if you volunteer.

- **Apply for VA health care online (VA Form 10-10EZ)**

Start your application for VA health care now.