

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

January 7, 2021

Piedmont's Vaccine Taskforce FAQs

In response to a request from the State, Piedmont has created a cross functional, system-level taskforce to create a plan for how we will assist in deploying a COVID-19 vaccine. Our deployment is in accordance State and Federal agency guidelines.

Below are FAQs the Taskforce has developed for all of our stakeholders – patients and workforce members. Use the links below to navigate to various sections of this document.

General COVID-19 Vaccine Questions	2
Vaccine Development and Availability	2
Vaccine Benefits	2
Vaccine Safety and Efficacy	3
Manufacturer specific vaccine information	3
Vaccine Considerations in Special Populations	3
Patient Information	5
Before, during, and after my vaccine visit	5
Second Dose Questions	5
COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccinations	6
Workforce Members	7
Piedmont's Prioritization Process	7
Post Vaccine Employee Information	8
Second Dose Information	9
Provider Specific Information	9

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

General COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

What is a vaccine?

Vaccines currently prevent millions of deaths every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles and influenza. Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defenses -- the immune system---to recognize and fight off the viruses and bacteria they target. If the body is exposed to those disease-causing germs later, the body is immediately ready to destroy them, preventing illness. Vaccines are also critical to the prevention and control of infectious disease outbreaks.

Is a COVID-19 vaccine necessary?

Yes. COVID-19 (caused by SARS-CoV-2) can be a mild illness in some or lead to severe disease or even death in previously healthy people. Now, there is an authorized AND recommended vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Learn more about the top 8 things you need to know about the national COVID-19 Vaccination Program and general information about COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).

Vaccine Development and Availability

Where can I find out more information about COVID-19 vaccine development?

[Click here](#) to review information about development of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, including information about rate of development.

Are any COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA?

Yes. Pfizer received authorization for emergency use on 12/10/2020 and Moderna received authorization for emergency use on 12/18/2020. Currently, no COVID-19 vaccines are fully approved by the FDA.

What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

The FDA can issue an EUA during a public health emergency to allow the special use of a medical product not yet approved by the FDA. For the FDA to issue an EUA, safety and efficacy must be demonstrated, and certain criteria must be met, including that there are no adequate, approved and available alternatives.

What does the FDA review for the EUA process?

Similar to an approval evaluation, the FDA reviews clinical trial data, looking specifically for safety data and efficacy data to make their decision. Career scientists at the FDA are tasked with ensuring that this vaccine is safe and it works, just as they do for all other vaccines we use in the United States.

When will a vaccine be available?

When an EUA is granted, a company may begin shipments to state distribution centers, where they will be distributed to pre-arranged vaccination sites. It is expected that initially, there will be a limited supply of vaccine. Learn more about [current availability and when to expect more widespread availability here](#).

Who is deciding who can receive the vaccine first, i.e., what does "high risk" mean?

Piedmont offers COVID-19 immunization in accordance with recommendations from the Georgia Department of Health as well as the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the National Academy of Medicine's Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, and other national guiding bodies.

Based on these agencies' general guidance, Piedmont will initially focus on vaccinating workforce members that are considered to be at highest risk. At this time, proposed phasing (as it pertains to Piedmont and Georgia) includes:

- Phase One: frontline healthcare workers (December 2020)
- Phase Two: vulnerable populations (January 2021)
- Phase Three: general population, i.e., mass vaccination (timing unknown)

Can I choose which COVID-19 vaccine I will receive?

Not initially. Due to the high manufacturing standards and worldwide need for vaccines, the initial phases of vaccine distribution do not allow for choice of manufacturer. Pfizer and Moderna, the two companies who have vaccines granted with an EUA, utilize the same platform and perform similarly. [See more about different types of COVID-19 vaccines here](#).

Vaccine Benefits

I've never had COVID. What are the benefits of getting vaccinated against COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you healthy from COVID-19, build immunity safely, and eventually stop the pandemic.

I've had COVID or tested positive for antibodies. Do I still benefit from the vaccine?

Yes, the CDC recommends that even if you have had COVID or tested positive for antibodies, you should still receive the vaccine. This is because re-infection is possible and because of the severe health risks associated with COVID-19.

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

The only requirement for people who have had COVID is they be symptom-free and at least 10 days from the beginning of symptoms. For patients who tested positive that never developed symptoms, they should be at least 10 days from the date of their positive test.

Vaccine Safety and Efficacy

Will the COVID-19 vaccines be safe?

A thorough safety review is the cornerstone of the FDA's EUA process. Career vaccine scientists conduct this review, just as they do for all other FDA safety reviews. For more information, visit the [CDC's Safety of COVID-19 vaccines](#) and [CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ's](#) here.

Will the COVID-19 vaccines be effective?

Learn more about how well vaccines work in clinical trials, and how the nation's vaccine experts will continue to study effectiveness in the real world [here](#).

How much will a vaccine reduce my risk of COVID-19 and its complications?

Preliminary analyses of Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines show that they are over 94% effective in preventing COVID-19 symptoms in clinical studies. Learn more about how the nation's vaccine experts will continue to study effectiveness in the real world [here](#).

What are the potential side effects of the vaccine?

Side effects from COVID-19 vaccination are normal and indicate that you are building protection. Most of the side effects go away quickly. [Learn more about what side effects to expect and what to do about them if you experience them here](#).

Common side effects for both vaccines include fever, fatigue, headache, chills and muscle and/or joint aches and pain in addition to redness and swelling at the vaccination site. And, these side effects have been more frequent with the second dose.

Where can I get the vaccine - my physician's office, Piedmont Quick Care?

Currently, vaccine is not available to the greater public through most physician offices. Once it is available, we will provide information on our website about what locations will receive vaccine when.

Manufacturer specific vaccine information

What are the ingredients in the vaccine?

Pfizer ingredients:

The vaccine contains a nucleoside-modified messenger RNA (modRNA) encoding the viral spike glycoprotein (S) of SARS-CoV-2. The vaccine also includes the following ingredients: lipids ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2-[(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol), potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate, and sucrose.

Moderna ingredients:

The vaccine contains messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), lipids (SM-102, polyethylene glycol [PEG] 2000 dimyristoyl glycerol [DMG], cholesterol, and 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine [DSPC]), tromethamine, tromethamine hydrochloride, acetic acid, sodium acetate, and sucrose.

What are the storage and handling procedures to ensure it is safe?

Each vaccine will have its own unique storage and handling procedures. Piedmont is taking careful and specific measures to ensure that we are prepared for and can follow all protocols for each of the vaccines that may be made available.

Vaccine Considerations in Special Populations

Is the COVID-19 vaccine recommended for immunocompromised patients?

Immunocompromising conditions increase the risk of severe disease. An immunocompromised patient may receive the vaccine as long as they have been counselled on the lack of safety and efficacy data, and the importance of adhering to masking and physical distancing to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine recommended for pregnant women?

There are no data on safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women. Pregnancy increases risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and COVID-19 may increase risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth. If you are pregnant you may choose to be vaccinated. A discussion with your healthcare provider can help you make an informed decision.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine recommended for breastfeeding women?

There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or the effects of mRNA vaccines on breastfed infants. mRNA vaccines are not live virus vaccines and are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. If you are breastfeeding you may choose to be vaccinated. A discussion with your healthcare provider can help you make an informed decision.

Can children get the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

The Pfizer vaccine will be available for patients 16 and older. The Moderna vaccine will be available for patients 18 and older. There are ongoing trials in younger children at this time.

I had COVID-19 and received therapy for it; should I still get vaccinated?

Yes, but it is important to discuss the timing of vaccination with your doctor. It is not recommended to get vaccinated within 90 days of receiving convalescent plasma or monoclonal antibody therapy in order to avoid decreasing the vaccine's effectiveness.

Where can I go for more information on the COVID-19 Vaccine?

There are several resources, including the CDC's Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination. Also, please see:

- [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html)
- <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>
- [hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html](https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html)
- [Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet](#)
- [Moderna EUA Fact Sheet](#)

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

Patient Information

Before, during, and after my vaccine visit

What will the vaccine cost?

There is no charge for the COVID vaccine.

What should I do before my vaccine?

Talk to your doctor about getting a vaccine for COVID-19. Remember to bring your mask, and any other additional identification materials required by your vaccination center. For individuals who have had a severe allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine (see question about vaccine ingredients) or a severe allergic reaction to any previous vaccines, it is not recommended that you receive COVID-19 vaccine at this time.

What should I do during my vaccine visit?

Wear your mask into the vaccine clinic and during your vaccination. You should receive a vaccination card or printout that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. You will also get a paper or an electronic version of a fact sheet from the manufacturer of the authorized COVID-19 vaccine that you received. Make sure you review this and ask any questions you may have before leaving. If your vaccine requires 2 doses, make sure to schedule your 2nd dose.

What should I do after my vaccine visit?

Sign up for v-safe at www.cdc.gov/vsafe. V-safe is a free, smartphone-based tool that uses texts and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive your vaccination. Continue to wear your mask and practice social distancing.

Can I get the vaccine if I am not feeling well?

Yes. Vaccination is safe and effective in patients with mild illnesses including common colds, mild diarrhea, or other mild ailments. However, if you have a fever over 100 F, your vaccination will be rescheduled.

How can I get proof that I've had the vaccine?

You will receive an immunization card at the end of the visit. Additionally, your vaccine will be recorded in GRITS, the official vaccine registry of the state of Georgia. You may request a print out of your GRITS record through your primary care physician.

How many shots do I get?

It depends on what company manufactures your vaccine. Most COVID-19 vaccine schedules require two shots. You will get the same type of shot for the 2nd dose as you did with the first dose. You should still receive the second dose even if you had side effects from the first dose.

Also, in the United States, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are **not** interchangeable, meaning, you should not get one of each; both shots should be the same product. The safety and efficacy of a mixed-product series have not been evaluated.

Will I need to get this shot every year like the flu shot?

It is not currently known what the maintenance vaccine schedule will be.

How soon are the vaccines effective?

The vaccines protect best after the series is complete, and the efficacy of the 2 shot regimen is what the FDA evaluated. It is important to get both shots to be fully protected. Typically, 1-2 weeks after the 2nd shot, the vaccines will be fully effective.

How long does immunity from the vaccine last?

It is still too early to determine how long after immunization or infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19; however, there will be ongoing evaluation of immunity in clinical trials even after the vaccines receive EUA.

Do I still need to wear a mask and physically distance after I've had 2 doses of vaccine?

Yes. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before changing recommendations about masking and physically distancing. For more information, visit CDC's COVID-19 FAQs.

When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others after I have been vaccinated?

It is not known when mask wearing and physical distancing will no longer be needed to control the spread of COVID-19.

Second Dose Questions

What if I can't get my second shot on the exact date required?

Talk to your doctor about getting your second dose as soon as you are able. At this time, there are no recommendations to repeat the vaccine series if your second dose is late.

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

Can my second shot be different from my first one? (i.e., I receive Pfizer first but want to get Moderna as my second shot.)

At this time, the FDA has not approved mixing shots.

Are the side effects worse for the second dose?

Common side effects for both vaccines include fever, fatigue, headache, chills and muscle and/or joint aches and pain in addition to redness and swelling at the vaccination site. And, these side effects have been more frequent with the second dose.

COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccinations

Does the COVID-19 vaccine take the place of the pneumonia vaccine or the flu vaccine?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine does not take the place of the pneumonia vaccine or the flu vaccine. It is important to be up to date on all immunization including pneumonia and flu vaccines in addition to COVID-19. Please consult with your health care provider regarding which vaccines are recommended for you.

Can I get another vaccine like the flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine on the same day?

No. Currently, it is recommended that no additional vaccines are given two weeks before or after your COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

Workforce Members

(employees, contract/agency staff, non-employed providers, residents and volunteers)

Make sure that you have read carefully the General and Patient FAQs for answers that are applicable to anyone receiving the vaccine.

Will Piedmont participate in offering the COVID-19 vaccination?

Piedmont recognizes that mass vaccination against SARS-CoV-2, along with other public health strategies, offers the best opportunity to protect the public from COVID-19. As a healthcare provider, we play an important role in distributing the vaccine, not only to frontline healthcare workers, who are our employees, but eventually to the general public.

Which vaccine will Piedmont receive?

Piedmont has received shipments from both Pfizer and Moderna. Eventually, there could be other vaccines available as well.

Will the vaccine be mandatory for Piedmont employees?

No; however, the vaccine is strongly recommended, especially for employees >65 or those at “high risk” for severe COVID-19.

As an employee or staff member will I have to pay for the vaccine?

No, Piedmont is covering all costs of the vaccine for our healthcare workers. It is free of charge for you.

Will Piedmont offer the COVID-19 vaccine to employees and medical staff?

Piedmont is distributing the vaccine to our workforce in accordance with recommendations from the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and guidance from the CDC; other federal agencies; and the Georgia Department of Health.

After initially prioritizing high risk and medium risk members of our workforce, Piedmont has now made the vaccine available to all members of our workforce including employees, agency and contract staff, and medical staff.

How will I be kept informed?

Information related to Piedmont’s vaccine response can and will change rapidly. Regular updates will be sent through our Piedmont, Leader’s and Provider’s Dose e-newsletters and on *The Village*.

Piedmont’s Prioritization Process

How were workforce members selected to be included in the first wave of the vaccination lottery?

During periods of limited vaccine availability, Piedmont will utilize risk stratification guidelines issued by both the CDC and Piedmont Healthcare’s Vaccination Committee. Every workforce member has been reviewed based on their job, department, and potential exposure risk to COVID positive patients and PUIs. Job families and departments have been categorized based on their potential exposure risk and those deemed “high-risk” are being entered into the first-wave of the vaccination lottery.

How do I sign up to receive the vaccine?

All employees have received notification to opt-in to receive the vaccine. The email includes two options for completing the COVID Vaccine Participation Survey – one via HealthStream and another via Survey Monkey. Completing either of these will alert the scheduling team to contact you to schedule your appointment for vaccination.

Once I opt-in for the vaccine, when will I receive it?

Once a member of Piedmont’s workforce completes the COVID Participation Survey (either through HealthStream or Survey Monkey) and indicates they would like to receive the vaccine, you will receive an email with further instructions as to how to schedule your vaccine appointment. While Piedmont has received sufficient quantity of the vaccine to broaden the scope of the workforce who can opt-in, we are still prioritizing high and medium risk workforce members.

What if I receive the email notification indicating that I’m eligible for the vaccination but I’m not interested in receiving the vaccine. What should I do?

All employees have received notification to opt-in to receive the vaccine. All employees should complete the survey, regardless of their vaccine intentions. Any employee who receives a survey link and is not interested in receiving the vaccine at this time should opt out via the survey.

What if I make an appointment and then need to cancel it?

We understand that our workforce members are extremely busy caring for our patients and our communities. As long as you are able to provide some advance notice of your need to reschedule, our Vaccinator teams will do our best to ensure that team members are able to receive the vaccine during others dates/times. During times of limited vaccine inventory, if a team member misses more than one appointment, we will need to allow other staff members the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Based on inventory and Vaccinator availability, it may be necessary to reprioritize the vaccine for these individuals.

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

Can I give my appointment to someone else?

No, you will not be able to give your appointment to another individual.

Post Vaccine Employee Information

How long will the vaccine appointment take? How long before I can return to work?

The appointment for vaccination will take approximately 30 minutes, including a 15-minute observation period after receipt of the vaccine.

What do I need to bring with me to my vaccine appointment?

Although our Vaccinators will have a report with eligible workforce members that have been selected through the lottery process, please bring a copy of the COVID Vaccine Lottery Selection email and ensure you have your badge on and visible to the Vaccinator.

If I get the vaccine do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing?

Yes. Previously answered in the patient section.

If I get the vaccine do I still need to follow all of the Piedmont COVID-19 policies?

Yes. Even if you choose to get the vaccine, all employees will be expected to adhere to Piedmont's COVID policies.

If I get the vaccine will I be assigned to COVID-19 patients?

Receiving the vaccine will have no effect on your work assignments.

What if I have questions or specific concerns about the vaccine or about whether or not I should take the vaccine?

You should contact your primary care physician to discuss your concerns.

What if I experience an adverse reaction or side effect from the vaccine?

Mild to moderate adverse reactions or side effects should be reported using CDC's v-safe application. V-safe is a smartphone based opt in program that uses text messaging and web surveys to check in on vaccine recipients. Additionally, each vaccine manufacturer will have a hotline to report adverse events. See your information sheet given when you received the vaccine. If you are experiencing a severe adverse reaction, please seek prompt medical attention.

What if I feel too ill to work after my vaccine?

If you are not feeling well enough to work after receiving the vaccine you should follow your normal call-out procedures. Employed workforce members will need to request a leave at LeaveIntake@piedmont.org for absences that exceed three consecutive days. Although workforce members are not required to share specific information with their leaders related to the nature of the request for leave, Piedmont's Leaves of Absence policy requires all employees to notify their leaders of the need for time away.

What if I choose not to get it now, but change my mind down the road – can I still get it?

Yes. You should ask your leader to notify your entity HR Business Partner. We'll send you a second HealthStream survey link in order to formally opt-in and to be registered. As Piedmont receives additional allocations of the vaccine, we will continue to communicate with the employees eligible to receive the vaccine.

I'm not considered high or medium risk due to my role at Piedmont, but I have a personal medical condition that puts me at a higher risk of illness from COVID-19. Will this impact my eligibility for the vaccination?

As always, employees seeking a medical accommodation in order to safely complete the essential functions of their job should reach out to the appropriate Workplace Accommodation Specialist for their entity.

Name/Title	Entity Support	Contact Information
Nikki Jackson, Senior Workplace Accommodation Consultant	Athens, Fayette, Rockdale, Columbus	Nikki.Jackson@piedmont.org
Leslie Parker	Atlanta, Henry, Newnan	Leslie.Parker@piedmont.org
Roslyn Foreman	System Office, Physician Enterprise, Mountainside, Newton, Walton	Roslyn.Foreman@piedmont.org

Will Piedmont offer the COVID-19 vaccine to our patients?

Piedmont will follow the state's and CDC's recommendations for prioritization of vaccine administration, which will be based on vaccine supply and other factors. Based on Georgia's decision to open vaccinations up to Phase 1b (age 65 and older, first responders) Piedmont will begin offering the vaccine to Piedmont patients who are age 65 or older beginning Jan. 11.

Will Piedmont offer the COVID-19 vaccine to our broader communities?

Yes, we hope to do so once there is sufficient supply.

Will Piedmont employees who are not frontline healthcare workers be eligible to receive the vaccine?

COVID Vaccines

One More Tool to Reduce the Spread of COVID in Our Communities

Yes. Piedmont has requested sufficient supply of the COVID vaccine to vaccinate the entire workforce and has currently received enough supply to offer the vaccine to all Piedmont employees, contract/ agency staff, medical staff and members of the Piedmont Clinic.

Second Dose Information

I received Pfizer as my first shot; where do I receive my second shot?

Due to the complexity of moving the Pfizer vaccine and the broad availability of the Moderna vaccine at all Piedmont hospitals, we will only be giving the Pfizer shots at the Piedmont hospitals with ultra-cold storage: Athens, Atlanta, Columbus and Henry.

I received my first shot at a non-Piedmont location. Can I receive my second shot at Piedmont?

No. The vaccine is being distributed to healthcare providers taking into consideration the two-shot dose, so you'll need to return to the same provider for your second shot.

Provider Specific Information

Study Specific Information:

- [Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet](#)
- [Moderna EUA Fact Sheet](#)

Will I be able to order private stock vaccine down the road to give in my clinic to my patients?

We anticipate a time when there are many more distribution locations than will be available initially. Much of this will be determined by the handling and storage requirements of each vaccine and a physician practice's ability to meet those requirements.

I'm an independent physician on Piedmont's medical staff. Will my office staff be able to receive the vaccine from Piedmont?

Beginning Jan. 11, Piedmont will begin to offer the COVID vaccination to the staff of all independent Piedmont Clinic practices. A Clinic communication was sent on Jan. 6 with more instructions on how to register, the locations for the vaccination, what to bring with you, etc.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine a "live" virus vaccine?

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not live. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use an mRNA platform to induce immunity to the spike protein.

Have clinical trial participants experienced adverse events or side effects from the vaccine?

Yes. See the answer to "side effects."

What are the storage and handling procedures to ensure it is safe?

Each vaccine will have its own unique storage and handling procedures. Piedmont is taking careful and specific measures to ensure that we are prepared for and can follow all protocols for each of the vaccines that may be made available.

Below are the storage and handling instructions for the Pfizer vaccine.

