



Confidence comes with every card.®



# Prepare. Protect. Prevent.

## COVID-19 vaccine information for Michigan members

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network remain committed to helping guide you through the COVID-19 pandemic as the nation works to halt the spread of this disease through a mass vaccination effort.

**Blue Cross and BCN members can expect to pay \$0 to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.**

### About the COVID-19 vaccines

The vaccines that have received FDA emergency use authorization are the **Moderna** vaccine, the **Pfizer/BioNTech** vaccine and the **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine.

Moderna and Pfizer are delivered in two doses, administered a few weeks apart. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is delivered in one dose.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine requires deep freeze storage, while the Moderna vaccine requires cold storage at higher temperatures. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine can be stored in normal freezers.

All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.\*

For more information about the vaccines, safety and possible side effects go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and select *COVID-19 vaccines*.

### Who's eligible?

Michigan has announced that these groups are eligible to receive the vaccine:

- Healthcare workers
- Staff and residents of long-term care facilities
- Police officers, firefighters and inspectors
- Pre-K through grade 12 teachers
- Prison and jail officers
- Childcare providers
- Mortuary service workers who routinely work with infectious materials
- People age 65 and older
- People age 60 and older if their healthcare provider is removing barriers to healthcare access
- Workers in food processing and agriculture settings
- People age 50 and older with medical conditions or disabilities and caregiver family members and guardians who care for children with special health needs (as of March 8).
- Everyone 50 and older (as of March 22)
- All Michigan adults (as of April 5)

**Note:** This is up to date as of March 15, 2021. The schedule is subject to change by the government. New eligible groups can be added before previous groups are fully vaccinated.

At this time, demand for the vaccine from those in eligible groups dramatically exceeds current supply in Michigan and elsewhere. There is no timetable as to when this will be resolved. The situation could change daily as government agencies continue to work to expand supply.

The state has indicated it will contact employers whose employees are eligible for the vaccine because their occupations have been included in the first phase of distribution. We don't have information about the state's process. Michigan and its partners will provide information to eligible employers about which types of workers are eligible for vaccination and how and where these workers can be vaccinated. Employers can check [here](#) for next steps.

## Where to go

For eligible individuals 65 and older, there are multiple avenues to receive the vaccine:

- Local health departments will schedule appointments and administer the vaccine. However, because of limited supply, there are far fewer appointment slots than demand. County health departments are encouraging online registration; some are also providing telephone numbers. You'll find information about these government vaccine sites at [Michigan.gov\\*\\*](#).
- Some major hospital systems have started scheduling appointments at their facilities. They're giving instructions on how to make an appointment to those who have used their services. This includes registering through a hospital-specific website or a hospital patient app such as "MyChart." Demand for appointments have far exceeded the number of slots available.

Some local and county governments have launched mass "mega" vaccination sites. Two sites are TCF Center in downtown Detroit and the Suburban Collection in Oakland County. We anticipate other areas in the state will do the same. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State of Michigan are partnering with the Detroit Lions and Ford Field to host a mass COVID-19 vaccine site, opening March 24. The site will be open 8 a.m.-8:30 p.m., seven days a week for eight weeks under the federal government's vaccination pilot program. You can visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](#) to register.

Some registered pharmacies are distributing the vaccine. However, supply is limited so you must check with your local pharmacy for more information on how to sign up. Additional pharmacies, doctors' offices and other providers are planning to administer vaccines to individuals when the supply becomes available to them.

Individuals who live outside Michigan should check vaccine websites and distribution plans within their own states, which should be available through state or county public health departments. The eligibility policies, vaccine supplies and other vaccine information can vary from state to state.

## Common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines

### Is the vaccine safe?

Vaccine developers used proven work completed for other vaccines as a starting point in their fight against COVID-19, giving them a head start. Each COVID-19 vaccine approved for use by the FDA followed the same rigorous testing and evaluation as other vaccinations deemed safe. You can ask your physician about the benefits of the vaccine or you can find information about vaccine safety at the following websites:

- Check information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. You can find it by going to [cdc.gov](#) and selecting *COVID-19 vaccines*.
- Visit the state of Michigan's website, [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](#). (If you are in another state, check the public health site in that state.)

Blue Cross has been monitoring information associated with the development and distribution of the vaccines for COVID-19. We have not found any evidence that receiving the vaccines increase the risk of or causes death.

### What are the side effects?

We recommend people check with their physician for questions about *potential* side effects and the benefits of receiving the vaccine. Information about potential side effects has been posted on the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – go to [cdc.gov](#) and select *COVID-19 vaccines*. The state of Michigan's website, [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](#), has information about potential side effects as well. (If people are in another state, they should check the public health site in that state.)

### **Can people choose which vaccine they get?**

Vaccine availability will be based on distribution, available doses, and other factors.

### **If you are vaccinated, can you still carry the virus and infect people?**

This is still under study. According to the CDC, they are still conducting studies around the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. If you're vaccinated you should still continue to wear a mask, wash hands, and practice safe social distancing.

### **If you get the vaccine and then have a COVID test or an antibody test, would the tests show you had COVID?**

The vaccines for COVID-19 do not contain the live virus; if a member receives the vaccine and is later given a diagnostic test for COVID-19 they will not test positive as a result of having the vaccination. Because vaccinations condition the body to produce antibodies in response to a viral infection, it is possible for a member to test positive for COVID-19 antibodies after they have received the vaccination.

### **If I'm planning on having a baby, do the experts recommend vaccination?**

People who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination. Experts believe the vaccines are unlikely to pose a specific risk for people who are pregnant. However, the actual risks of vaccines to the pregnant person and her fetus are unknown because these vaccines have not been studied in pregnant women. None of the approved vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.

Members with questions about getting vaccinated should have a discussion with their healthcare provider to make an informed decision.

*This information can change daily so we encourage employers and employees to check the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and local county and hospital websites on a regular basis.*

Learn more at [bcbsm.com/coronavirus](https://bcbsm.com/coronavirus).

*\*[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html)*

*\*\*Blue Cross doesn't own or control this website.*



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees  
of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association