



# U.S. Army Europe and Africa COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

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## **Q. What are the DoD Priorities for COVID Vaccinations?**

A: The distribution process is phase-driven to protect our military community from COVID-19 as quickly as possible. As we work through vaccinating all of our healthcare personnel and first responders during the initial distribution, or pilot phase, we will also begin to look at our highly deployable forces here in Europe and our high-risk populations. After that, we'll be able to focus on our healthy service members, civilians, families, retirees not part of the high-risk population, etc. We will put out details about subsequent phases, as soon as that information is available.

[Click here for the full DoD Priority Distribution plan.](#)

## **Q. How do you define a "high-risk" beneficiary (Phase 2) in terms of COVID Vaccine prioritization?**

A. High-risk beneficiaries, as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are:

- Adults of any age with the following conditions:
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
  - Down Syndrome
  - Obesity (BMI of 30 or higher)
  - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
  - Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
  - Sickle cell disease
  - Type 2 diabetes
- Anyone over the age of 65

## **Q. Are there certain people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19?**

A. The risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19 increases with age, with the greatest risk among those aged 85 or older. Adults of any age with the following conditions are also at increased risk of severe illness: Cancer; chronic kidney disease, COPD; heart disease; weakened immune system; obesity; pregnancy; sickle cell disease; smoking; and type 2 diabetes mellitus. COVID-19 is a new disease. Currently there are limited data and information about the impact of many underlying medical conditions and whether they increase risk. Talk with your provider about your individual risk factors and appropriate precautions.

*Sources: CDC. Older Adults. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html> CDC. People with Certain Medical Conditions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>*

## **Q. Can local national (LN) employees get the COVID Vaccine from our Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs)?**

A. Currently, Local National Employees cannot receive the COVID Vaccine in our MTFs. However, the Defense Department is evaluating additional policy options to ensure military readiness by protecting the health and well-being of the Department's Total Force.

## **Q: How many shots of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?**

A: The two authorized and recommended vaccines to prevent COVID-19 in the United States both need two shots to be effective. There is one COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 3 clinical trials in the United States that uses one shot.

*Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>*



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## **Q. Will service members be required to take the vaccine?**

A. Currently the vaccine will be offered on a voluntary basis only due to its FDA emergency use authorization. When formally licensed by the FDA, however, the DoD may require a vaccine for military personnel or personnel in specific fields, as is the case for the influenza vaccine, but that has not been determined yet at this time.

## **Q. What is an Emergency Use Authorization?**

A. Drugs and vaccines have to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that only safe and effective products are available to the American public. During public health emergencies, when there is good scientific reason to believe that a product is safe and is likely to treat or prevent disease, the FDA may authorize its use through an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), even if definitive proof of the effectiveness of the drug or vaccine is not known. FDA pre-licensure approval is considered for treatment or prevention of diseases that are very serious.

*Source: MHS Communications Plan. COVID-19 (SARS-COV-2) Prevention – Vaccination Questions and Answers.*

## **Q. How do we know if the vaccine is safe? How will you monitor and track vaccine side effects?**

A. DoD is confident in the stringent regulatory process and requirements of the FDA. Manufacturers are required to submit their raw data for the FDA to review. Safety, immune response, and efficacy data from the trial stages are submitted to the FDA before they are authorized for use and distribution. Per FDA requirements, DoD will be monitoring and tracking vaccine reports of vaccine side effects through various surveillance activities both internal and external to the DoD.

## **Q. If I get vaccinated, do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing?**

A. Masks and physical distancing will still be necessary until a large proportion of the population is vaccinated and the vaccine is proven to provide long-term protection. Global and national public health authorities are expected to continue to recommend wearing masks and practicing physical distancing, for everyone, until pandemic risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

*Source: MHS Communications Plan. COVID-19 (SARS-COV-2) Prevention – Vaccination Questions and Answers.*

## **Q. What kind of information will be available to me before I receive the vaccine?**

A. Each potential recipient of COVID-19 vaccine will receive a vaccine-specific Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Fact Sheet for Recipients from the FDA, which will provide the following information:

- Basic information on COVID-19, symptoms, and what to discuss with a health care provider before vaccination Who should and should not receive the vaccine
- That recipients have the choice to receive the vaccine
- Dosage and vaccine series information
- Risks and benefits of the vaccine
- An explanation of what an EUA is and why it is issued z Any approved available alternatives for preventing COVID-19

*Additional resources Source: CDC. COVID-19 Vaccine Training Modules. <https://www2.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/covid19/SHVA/10080.asp>*



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**Q. How will I be able to keep track of what vaccine I got and when I need to get a second dose?**

A. All vaccine recipients will be provided a copy of the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card after receipt of the vaccine. It is recommended that the second-dose appointment be made at the time of initial vaccinations, or instructions provided on procedures for second dose follow-up. If a vaccine recipient has a smartphone, it is recommended that they take a photo of the vaccination record card as a back-up copy and set a calendar reminder for receipt of the second dose.

*Source: Draft DHA-IPM 20-xxx . DoD Coronavirus Disease (COVID)-19 Vaccination Program (CVP) Implementation.*

**Q. If I've already recovered from COVID-19 infection, do I need to be vaccinated?**

A. Because the duration of immunity from natural infection with COVID-19 is unknown, vaccine may have value in protecting people who have already had the disease. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Talk with your provider if you have been previously infected with COVID-19.

*Source: CDC. Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>*

Helpful resources:

<https://www.health.mil/About-MHS/MHS-Toolkits/COVID-19-Vaccine-Toolkit>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html#Getting>

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/#more-helpful-information-and-resources>

<https://www.tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine>

<https://www.army.mil/article/242249/what-you-should-know-about-getting-the-covid-19-vaccine>