

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory for staff?

At this time the vaccine will not be mandated for AU Health staff. Please note that the COVID-19 vaccine does not currently fall under the AU Health seasonal vaccination policy or vaccine recommendations for health care workers policy. AU Health reviews these policies on a routine basis and may include a COVID-19 requirement in the future.

2. What will the prioritization of distribution be for staff within the health system?

Based on operational and ethical considerations taken into account by our internal vaccine work group, the same distribution framework will be used as used previously for MMR vaccinations offered for the caregivers at Augusta University Health. Priority areas include direct COVID unit personnel, non-direct COVID unit personnel above the age of 50, non-direct COVID unit personnel under the age of 50.

3. Are Augusta University personnel eligible for the vaccine?

Distribution of immunizations will be prioritized based on the risk of your job function, not your employment platform.

4. How many doses/shots are included in the COVID-19 vaccine, and what is the time span between?

The COVID-19 vaccine consists of two doses with 21 days between doses for the Pfizer vaccine and 28 days between doses for the Moderna vaccine.

5. What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Side effects are seen in about 25-30% of individuals that take the vaccine. These include fatigue, low grade fevers, joint and muscle pains, and pain at the injection site. These generally last from 1- 3 days and resolve on their own. Rare anaphylactoid reactions have occurred in those with a severe history of allergies. No serious adverse effects have been reported otherwise.

6. How long if any do side effects last?

Side effects have been known to last a 1-3 days.

7. Are we offering the vaccine to staff who have already developed antibodies?

In the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, it appears the immune response you receive from vaccination is better than that of the natural infection. Therefore, we will offer and

recommend the vaccine for those who have already been infected with COVID-19. It would be better to wait 3 months after getting COVID until they receive the vaccine.

8. I was recently diagnosed with COVID. Should I receive the vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given when someone is acutely ill, but once healthy, we do recommend the vaccine. As above

9. Is there a need for isolation once you receive the vaccine? Are you infectious?

No, while social distancing and safety measures should still be followed, there is no need to isolate after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine does not contain a live virus, and you cannot become infected with COVID-19 from receiving it.

10. Is there any information/data available for pregnant/breastfeeding women with this vaccine? What is the recommendation for those employees?

There is insufficient data to say for certain what established safety and efficacy there is in pregnant women receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Pregnancy outcomes are unknown at this time.

11. Are students considered health care providers in the initial phase of distribution?

Health care students are considered health care providers and will be eligible.

12. Will the vaccine be offered to spouses or companions of AU Health staff members?

At this time we will be looking at vaccinating our employees only. There is not currently a provision to include the spouses or companions of our health care employees unless they qualify by some other means.

13. After receiving the vaccine should you continue to wear a mask?

Yes, at this time social distancing measures should not be relaxed. We still recommend following the three W's: Wash your hands, watch your distance and wear a mask. We will also continue to require the use of masks in our facility.

14. Once you have received the vaccine how long will immunity last?

As trials began only seven to eight months ago, it's too early to tell the lasting immunity of the COVID-19 vaccine. At every checkpoint during the vaccine trial thus far, there has been continued immunity. More than likely this will not be an annual vaccination.