



COVID-19 VACCINE: What You Need to Know

Current COVID-19 vaccines

There are two COVID-19 vaccines currently in use: the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (commonly called the Pfizer vaccine) and the Moderna vaccine.

Safe and effective

Vaccines are approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA authorization means that trials have proven the vaccine an effective defense against COVID-19. The FDA and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will continue to monitor safety and effectiveness data.

Safety is a top priority. No steps were skipped during the clinical trials and data review process for COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID vaccines are being held to the same standards as other vaccines to make sure they are safe.

No cost to the patient

As a part of the U.S. government's Operation Warp Speed, the vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be no cost to the person receiving the vaccine. However, providers may charge an administrative fee or for an office visit.

Who gets it first

The Louisiana Department of Health is following prioritization guidance from ACIP. Per this guidance, the first round of vaccines is being given to frontline healthcare personnel in hospitals, pre-hospital medical responders (firefighters/EMS) and residents and staff of nursing home/long-term-care facilities.

Who's next

LDH is following prioritization guidance from ACIP, which recently came out with refined guidance about Phases 1B and 2. LDH is reviewing and considering how best to apply this guidance to Louisiana. This is a fluid process, and priorities may change depending on the amount of vaccine that is available to Louisiana. Requests and inquiries about prioritization for the next phases may be sent to la.immunization@la.gov.

The vaccine is likely to become more widely available for the general population in late spring/summer 2021. When this happens, having a large portion of the population vaccinated is our best shot at a return to some form of normalcy. Based on conversations with our federal partners, we are encouraged that Louisiana will receive enough doses to vaccinate everyone who wants a shot.