

Questions and Answers: COVID-19 Vaccines for School and Child Care Staff

01/18/2021

When can school and child care staff expect to start getting vaccinated?

The state is currently still vaccinating in phase 1a as prioritized by federal guidance, focused on health care and long-term care residents and staff. The Governor recently announced that vaccinations for 65+ Minnesotans can occur through health systems and local public health to ensure there are no unused vaccine doses. School and child care staff may be eligible for the vaccine under multiple priority groups – based on age, prioritized sectors, etc. They can and should pursue these available vaccination opportunities as eligible. More information at mn.gov/vaccine.

Why did Minnesota create a pilot of COVID-19 vaccination for school and child care staff?

In an effort to prioritize children and prepare for when Minnesota has more vaccine available and able to move onto 1b, the Governor is piloting a process of vaccinating educators and child care programs in partnership. Though the vaccine will be made available to school and child care staff through the pilot sites beginning the week of January 18, not all school and child care staff will be able to immediately get the vaccine due to limited supply, especially as Minnesota continues to vaccinate 1a health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities. We ask for patience as we begin this pilot site program – there is not currently enough vaccine available for all of Minnesota's school and child care staff. As Minnesota receives more doses from the federal government, the vaccination process will speed up.

Which school and child care staff are eligible to participate?

All early learning through grade 12 school staff at public, nonpublic, and tribal schools including staff who contract with schools, such as bus drivers, are eligible to receive the vaccine. Staff working in licensed and non-school based certified child care programs – including licensed family child care providers – who are working in-person onsite are included in this pilot; school-based certified centers are included in school allocation as district employees. Child care providers are selected for the pilot through a random process.

Am I required to get the vaccine?

The state does not require school or child care staff to be vaccinated; COVID-19 vaccines are not required as a part of child care licensure. Individuals selected for a vaccine are not obligated to participate in the vaccination pilot or other vaccination opportunities.

How will school and child care staff schedule their vaccine?

With a few exceptions, the child care program or school will work directly with employers to secure an appointment through a state-sponsored appointment scheduling portal. School-based child care programs will need to work with their school to secure an appointment based on allocations. Due to the limited supply of vaccine, schools will need to prioritize employees based on face-to-face interaction with children. Child care providers will be selected through a random process. For the purposes of the pilot, a regional approach was developed to allocate vaccinations for school and child care staff based on vaccine distribution. Appointments are not guaranteed for all individuals selected. Those with a confirmed appointment will schedule their second dose at the time they schedule their first dose.

Do I need an appointment to receive a vaccine?

Yes. Every person receiving a vaccine at one of the pilot sites will require an appointment. Sites will not accept any walk-ups. If appointment times become available, those on the wait list will be contacted. You cannot get on a wait list by showing up at a vaccination pilot site.

If I am contacted by my healthcare provider or local public health and they have a vaccine available for me, can I get the vaccine that way?

Yes. If you have the chance to be vaccinated elsewhere and wish to receive the vaccine, you should not wait to get it via the school or child care program where you work.

Will school and child care staff need to show proof of employment when they arrive for their vaccine appointments?

Yes, school and child care staff will be instructed to bring a school ID badge, paystub, or provide their child care license number.

How early should I arrive for my appointment? How long will my appointment last?

In order to maximize efficiency, do not arrive more than 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. While serious side effects are rare, you will be asked to wait 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccination before leaving the site to make sure you feel alright.

Where are the pilot sites located?

Minnesota has created nine vaccine pilot sites across the state – seven in greater Minnesota and two in the Metro area. Most sites are at schools based on feedback from childcare providers and educators about what type of site would be accessible.

How much vaccine is available for school and child care staff at this time?

Due to the limited supply of vaccine for all Minnesotans currently eligible for the vaccine, the Governor dedicated approximately 6,000 doses for school and child care staff in the week of January 18 as a part of a state pilot to prioritize these workers. The distribution between education and child care is based on the percentage of the workforce per region. Once the federal government allocates more vaccine to Minnesota, the doses for school and child care staff will increase and processes of vaccinating will be informed by learnings from the pilot.

How does the distribution work?

In an effort to prioritize access across the state, there are seven sites in Greater Minnesota and two in the metro. Due to the complexity of the vaccine distribution, the number of vaccines per site is limited to the box size of vaccine (975). The allocation at each site is 50% for school and child care staff, the other 50% for 65+ Minnesotans. This half allocation is then divided proportionally based on the percentage of education and child care workforce. For child care, the process of identifying providers is randomized, ensuring a proportional number of staff in family and center-based programs receive an option to participate in the vaccine pilot. For education, each district and charter receives an allocation of vaccines and private schools will receive an allocation as well.

I have some concerns about the vaccine. Where can I get more information?

You can get more information about the vaccine including how it was developed and what to expect after you get your vaccine [at this fact sheet that has been posted on the Minnesota Department of Health's website.](#)

Do I still need to wear a mask after I receive the vaccine?

Yes. After the second vaccine dose, it takes about two weeks for your body to build up protection. It is not known yet how long COVID-19 vaccines may protect people who get them from the virus. It is not known yet if people who get the vaccine can transmit COVID-19 to others if they get infected with COVID-19. Until we know more you should continue to wear a mask, wash your hands, stay home when sick, and follow other health and safety guidance.