

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement | FAQ

Please Note: All references to “vaccine” or “vaccination” in this document refer to the COVID-19 vaccine unless otherwise noted.

For additional information or questions not noted here, contact CSH-COVID19@commonspirit.org.

1. Are COVID-19 vaccines required for CommonSpirit employees?

CommonSpirit Health will make the COVID-19 vaccine a condition of employment for all employees, including employees who work at non-care sites, those who do not provide direct patient care, and those who work remotely. This requirement also includes all physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, volunteers and others caring for our patients within our facilities. While the implementation date of this vaccination requirement may vary by region due to local and state regulations and conditions, verification of full vaccination is required by November 1, 2021. Medical and religious exemptions will be available to those who qualify, and the deadline to apply is August 23, 2021. [For CA and WA August 22, 2021] More information is coming soon.

2. What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

According to the CDC, a person is “fully vaccinated” two weeks after receiving all necessary doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. CommonSpirit employees must provide proof of full vaccination by Nov. 1 and therefore must have received all doses of the vaccine by Oct. 18.

3. Will there be exceptions for medical or religious reasons?

Medical and religious exemptions will be available to those who qualify, and the deadline to apply is August 23, 2021. [For CA and WA August 22, 2021] More information is coming soon.

4. How do I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

You can get a COVID-19 vaccine with CHI St. Joseph’s Health Employee Health, Community Health or your healthcare provider.

5. Why are COVID-19 vaccines required?

The primary reason for requiring the COVID-19 vaccine is safety. The highly infectious Delta variant now accounts for the vast majority of all COVID-19 cases in the U.S., and while universal masking in high-risk settings such as hospitals and care environments offers strong protection against infection and transmission, vaccination is the most effective and successful way to protect against COVID-19 and slow the spread.

6. Are other health systems requiring the vaccine for employees?

So far, [hundreds of other hospitals and health systems](#) across the country have made the decision to require COVID-19 vaccination for their employees, and more are adopting similar policies every day. Vaccination is the most effective and successful way to protect against COVID-19 and slow the spread.

7. What if my state or region has a different requirement?

CommonSpirit Health complies with all applicable state and local laws or regulations, and the implementation date of this vaccination requirement may vary by region due to local and state regulations and conditions. If your state or region has issued a vaccine requirement for health care workers that is different from our policy or guideline, we will comply with the local requirement.

8. What happens if I do not get vaccinated by November 1?

Additional information about the COVID-19 vaccine requirement is coming soon.

9. Is there a requirement on *which* vaccine to get?

Employees, physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, and volunteers must be fully vaccinated by Nov. 1, 2021 with any available COVID-19 vaccine recognized by the CDC. To be considered fully vaccinated, you must receive your last dose of the vaccine by October 18 -- two weeks before the November 1 deadline.

10. How soon should the vaccination process be started in order to be fully vaccinated by November 1?

Employees are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible if they haven't already -- or get their first dose of a two shot series by September 20 at the latest or a single shot series by October 18. To be considered fully vaccinated, you must receive your last dose of the vaccine two weeks before the November 1 deadline, on or before October 18. You can get your COVID-19 vaccine with CHI St. Joseph's Health Employee Health, Community Health or your healthcare provider.

11. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

According to the CDC and FDA, the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. The vaccines have been tested thoroughly through expansive clinical trials, and are authorized by the FDA. Decades of research have informed vaccine technology. The vaccines are extremely effective at preventing symptomatic disease, serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

12. Why aren't we waiting to require vaccines until they receive full approval from the FDA?

According to the CDC and FDA, the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and tens of millions of doses have been administered with very few serious side effects. The highly infectious Delta variant now accounts for the vast majority of all COVID-19 cases in the U.S., and while universal masking in high-risk settings such as hospitals offers strong protection against infection and transmission, vaccination is the most effective and successful way to protect against COVID-19 and slow the spread.

13. I have already been vaccinated. How do I provide proof of vaccination?

You will have your first opportunity to disclose your vaccination status to meet this requirement through a vaccine status survey from Employee Central. Please monitor your inbox for more information. All employees will need to provide proof of vaccination by Nov. 1, 2021, through this process. Physicians, and Advanced Practice Providers who are not employed by CommonSpirit Health will receive information about the process for disclosing their vaccination status. Volunteers will also receive additional information soon.

14. If I am vaccinated do I still need to wear a mask?

Yes. CommonSpirit Health has adopted universal masking at all facilities, regardless of vaccination status. Additionally, strict social distancing and hand hygiene protocols remain in place, as well as health screenings for employees and visitors upon entry to our facilities.

15. Will we ask leaders to comply first with vaccines, and then everyone else?

All CommonSpirit Health employees, physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, and volunteers are required to be vaccinated or have an approved medical or religious exemption by November 1, regardless of role.

16. Are remote workers required to get the vaccine?

Yes, the CommonSpirit Health COVID-19 vaccination requirement applies to remote workers.

17. Are we asking people to self attest their vaccination status, or show proof?

You will need to provide proof of vaccination through a vaccine status survey from Employee Central. Please monitor your inbox for more information. All employees will need to provide proof of vaccination by November 1, 2021, through this process. Employees may also provide proof locally with Wendy Gullicksrud, Infection Prevention/Employee Health, by bringing a copy of your vaccine card. Physicians, and Advanced Practice Providers who are not employed by CommonSpirit Health will receive information about the process for disclosing their vaccination status. Volunteers will also receive additional information soon.

18. How can I request a medical or religious exemption?

You may document your intent to request a medical or religious exemption through the vaccine status survey from Employee Central. This process must be completed by Aug. 23, 2021. (Aug. 22, 2021 for WA and CA) Please monitor your inbox for more information.

19. Is the decision to grant an exemption a local or organizational decision?

CommonSpirit Health recognizes that there may be a valid basis to seek a medical or a religious exemption from the vaccine, and we are prepared to assess these types of requests across CommonSpirit care sites. A standardized process is being established to review exemption requests and will be communicated soon.

20. Will physicians need to show proof they are vaccinated, or will they just self attest?

All CommonSpirit Health employees, physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, and volunteers are required to show proof of vaccination by November 1st, self-attestation is not permitted.

21. What if a patient requests to know the vaccination status of an employee?

CommonSpirit Health will not disclose an employee's private health information to patients. If the employee themselves decides to disclose their status to their patient it is their own independent decision.

22. What if a patient refuses to be cared for by someone who isn't vaccinated?

CommonSpirit Health will not disclose an employee's private health information to patients. We can assure patients that all CommonSpirit Health care sites follow strict protocols for hand hygiene, masking and PPE, according to CDC guidelines. We also conduct a health screening for all employees and visitors upon entry to our facilities.

23. Where can I get more information?

For more information, contact CSH-COVID19@commonspirit.org.