

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: Participants and Caregivers **LAST UPDATED May 3, 2021**

COMMON VACCINE QUESTIONS

➤ **How do vaccines work?**

Vaccines work by causing your body to develop an immune response. Each time your body is exposed to either a vaccine (or virus) it creates antibodies to help fight off the infection and develops immune “memory” to help fight off future infections. This immune response gets stronger each time the body comes in contact with the virus or vaccine, which is why many vaccines require at least two doses.

➤ **What types of vaccines are there for COVID-19?**

Most of the COVID-19 vaccine types are just like the ones you received during childhood. The goal is to put a non-active version of the virus or some of the virus parts (that cannot infect you) into your body so that your body develops antibodies to help fight the virus in the future. Newer types of vaccines are being tried for COVID-19 using only small parts of the virus (such as mRNA) to create an immune response; these small parts cannot infect you.

➤ **What are the main vaccines that are being considered for COVID-19?**

Vaccines from Pfizer (mRNA), Moderna (mRNA), and Johnson and Johnson have been approved for use in the U.S. by the Federal Drug Administration. There are many other vaccines being studied as well, including one from AstraZeneca.

➤ **How effective are they?**

Early results show the three main vaccines are:

- Pfizer ~ 95% effective
- Moderna ~ 95% effective
- Johnson and Johnson ~ 85% effective
- AstraZeneca ~ 70% effective

For comparison, in some years, the annual flu shot is usually 40-50% effective.

➤ **Which vaccine will InnovAge be administering to participants and staff?**

At this time, we will administer either the Pfizer or the Moderna vaccine, depending on the vaccine that is first available to us. Both vaccines are safe and effective against COVID-19.

➤ **What are the side effects?**

Side effects are rare but can include muscle aches and 1-2 days of a fever.

➤ **If I experience the side effects, does this mean that I have COVID-19?**

No. Side effects indicate that the vaccine is working and that it has triggered an immune response. They are a good indication your body is reacting to the vaccine. That said, if you don't have any side effects, it doesn't mean the vaccine is any less effective.

➤ **Is the COVID-19 vaccine an annual vaccination, like the flu?**

It's unclear how long the vaccines will provide protective immunization. It could range from one season (like the flu vaccine) to a lifetime (like measles).

➤ **What if I already had COVID-19? Do I still need to receive the vaccine?** The CDC still recommends that individuals get the vaccine, even if they have previously had COVID-19.

➤ **Can I get infected with COVID-19 and can I spread it if I have received the vaccine?**

Yes, there is a chance of becoming infected even after receiving the vaccine, although the chance is much lower than if someone had not been vaccinated. The risk of being infected may occur before you have completed both vaccine shots, which is why it is important that you get both shots of the vaccine, and continue to wear a mask, social distance, and regularly wash your hands.

➤ **Are there two shots/doses for the COVID-19 vaccine?**

With the exception of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which is a one dose vaccine, the other two vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna require two doses. Two doses are required to provide full immunity. Immunity develops over days and weeks following the first shot. Similar to the shingles vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine is provided in two doses.

➤ **Do I need to wear a mask when I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. CDC recommends that during the pandemic people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside your household, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.

➤ **Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from COVID-19 vaccines?**

The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the virus, and it varies from person to person. This virus is new and we do not know how long natural immunity might last. It's also unclear how long the vaccines will provide protective immunization. It could range from one season (like the flu vaccine) to a lifetime (like measles).

TIMING AND LOGISTICS

➤ **When will InnovAge start vaccinating participants?**

InnovAge started vaccinating participants early in 2021. Participants are contacted with the details of the scheduled vaccination clinics. Some participants who are in skilled nursing homes or assisted living facilities may have received the vaccine in December 2020 in those facilities. InnovAge is coordinating with the facilities in this effort.

➤ **How will InnovAge provide vaccinations?**

InnovAge is partnering with a third party to provide vaccinations to staff and participants. The third party will work closely with our pharmacy, clinical, and operations teams and will be responsible for:

- scheduling and coordinating on-site clinic dates with each PACE | LIFE center
- ordering the vaccine and supplies
- ensuring the vaccine is kept at required cold storage temperatures
- providing on-site administration of the vaccine
- reporting vaccination data to local, state, and federal jurisdictions within 72 hours of administering each dose
- adhering to all CMS requirements for COVID-19 testing.

➤ **Will all participants be required to be vaccinated?**

We strongly recommend InnovAge participants be vaccinated for COVID-19. Participants must provide written consent for COVID-19 vaccine, just as they do for the flu or any other vaccine.

➤ **Some SNFs/ALFs are talking about providing vaccines to their residents. Will participants receive their vaccine at their facility or through InnovAge?**

InnovAge is working with its contracted facilities to allow them to vaccinate PACE participants at their facilities. For each participant, facilities are required to provide documentation that both doses have been administered.

➤ **Will InnovAge provide vaccinations in the home?**

InnovAge is working with a third party to provide all COVID-19 vaccinations to participants and staff. We will coordinate transportation to and from the centers for vaccinations. For participants who are unable to come in to the center, or for whom the care team decides it is safer they stay home, we will make arrangements for their vaccinations.

➤ **Will InnovAge staff be vaccinated?**

Yes, InnovAge will offer on-site vaccinations for staff. Additionally, all employees and contractors will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

➤ **I want to be sure that whoever is coming to my house or visiting my loved one has been vaccinated. Can you tell me if that's the case?**

As we have been doing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, InnovAge does not send any staff into participant homes if they have any signs or symptoms of COVID 19, or are not using personal protective equipment to protect the staff and participant from getting COVID 19. We also are testing staff for COVID-19 to ensure they are not infected. Once the vaccine is available, we will require all InnovAge staff receive the vaccine.

➤ **Once InnovAge participants and staff are vaccinated, can we stop wearing masks and come back to the centers?**

Unfortunately, no. CDC guidance requires everyone continue to wear masks and follow all other safety guidelines until the vaccine has been widely distributed.

InnovAge staff will continue to be required to wear personal protective equipment when caring for participants and when out in the community. Our reopening plans are outlined below. Once the vaccine is widely distributed, InnovAge will review its policies. Until then, all staff continue to be required to wear their PPE as previously instructed and centers remain closed except to essential staff.

REOPENING PLANS

➤ **How will InnovAge decide when it is safe to reopen a center?**

InnovAge's primary objective is the safety and health of everyone involved while we move ahead with reopening. To do this means a slow reopening process to keep everyone safe. Deciding to reopen a center will be based on a few factors, including internal and external metrics related to infection rates and positive cases in the community. Also, if there is a presence of an outbreak or infection rate increases, then a center may need to immediately or slowly close again.

➤ **What does the infection rate need to be for you to consider reopening?**

The average number of cases every day in a state needs to stay below 5%. This is not the only metric InnovAge is using to determine when a center might reopen but it is an important consideration.

➤ **How will caregivers be notified if their center is reopening and how much notice will be provided?**

InnovAge will continue to update caregivers and participants by mailed notifications, phone calls, and additional webinars or online meetings. We anticipate that we will be able to communicate a decision within 7-10 business days in advance of reopening.

➤ **What is InnovAge doing to ensure facilities are safe for participants?**

InnovAge's primary focus is keeping our participants safe and healthy. We are taking a number of steps, including:

- Screening participants about their health and how they are feeling before their appointment
- Checking everyone's temperature (staff and participants) when they arrive at a center
- Building modifications, such as plexiglass barriers, upgraded HVAC filters, and floor arrows and signs to signal one-way walking
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Frequent sanitizing of surfaces
- Mask-wearing by everyone while in an InnovAge bus or center
- Supporting physical distancing by
 - Keeping participants in one exam room
 - Limiting capacity on the buses
 - Limiting the number of people within the centers at any one time
- Re-training all of our staff on COVID safety and infection control

➤ **What are the first steps InnovAge is taking to reopen?**

InnovAge centers will reopen in phases.

- The first phase will involve participants whose individual care plans call for hands-on clinical care, dental services, or rehabilitation. These center visits will be conducted by appointment. Social activities will not be offered in the centers in this first phase.
- In the next phases, more participants and services will be brought back to your center. Our teams will closely monitor local virus trends and center operations to determine when a center can safely move to the next phase.
- Participants who do not require services at their center in the first phase of reopening will continue to be cared for as you are now. This includes wellness calls, meal delivery, medication delivery, telehealth visits, personal care assistance, and other services currently provided.

- **How will you proceed with reopening?**
After a few weeks of having appointment-only attendance, and if infection rates continue to be low, InnovAge will increase the number of participants in centers. One half-day of center attendance will be added for certain participants. Additional increases in center attendance will happen only if local community infection rates continue to decrease. We will still limit the number of people coming into centers to allow for physical distancing, and everyone will be required to wear masks while in the center.
- **Which participants will be brought back to the center first?**
The decision to bring back participants will be made by the interdisciplinary team based on each participant's care plan and medical needs.
- **If participants are uneasy about returning to the center, will services continue as they have been since COVID-19 started?**
Yes, InnovAge will continue providing wellness calls, meal delivery, medication delivery, telehealth visits, personal care assistance, and other services currently provided.

TESTING AND INFECTION CONTROL

- **Are you testing participants for COVID-19?**
Yes, we are able to test participants if their symptoms indicate a need for it.
- **Are you doing testing on-site?**
Yes, we will have COVID-19 testing capabilities on-site at all centers when they reopen.
- **Will participants be screened before getting on the InnovAge bus and/or coming to the center?**
Yes. Participants with scheduled appointments at the center will be called either the night before the appointment or the day of the appointment and asked a series of screening questions. Everyone coming to the center (staff and participants) will complete the screening questionnaire and have their temperature taken before entering the center.
- **Will InnovAge give participants masks to wear outside of our homes?**
Yes. InnovAge has provided each participant with disposable masks along with a reusable face mask. We will continue to share supplies with participants as long as they are available.

PARTICIPANT SERVICES

➤ **How is InnovAge providing medical care?**

Our staff continues to coordinate care and support for participants through telehealth, home visits, wellness calls, and other services. This includes meals, supplies, medication deliveries, as well as specialty appointments and other treatments. We continue to provide care and services in the safest way possible and according to individualized care plans.

TELEHEALTH

➤ **Will InnovAge continue to use telehealth?**

Yes. Even after our centers fully reopen, we plan to continue offering telehealth services.

➤ **Do InnovAge participants need to provide consent to receive telehealth services?**

Yes. InnovAge will follow all state laws regarding obtaining written or verbal consent. If you have questions about telehealth services, please contact your local center.

➤ **Some participants don't want to sign the consent or participate in telehealth. They find it stressful and would like to do it over the phone. What is your response?**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requires us to obtain participant consent and is allowing us to do that through verbal consent for telehealth visits. Participants have the right to refuse and not consent to telehealth services, but we think this is an important service at this time and would encourage all participants to provide their consent. Participant confidentiality remains secure. A telehealth visit is like going in to see your doctor, only you are meeting through video instead of being together physically.

➤ **If my loved one – an InnovAge participant – is not feeling well, what should I do?**

InnovAge participants who are not feeling well should contact their PACE | LIFE center's clinical team.

➤ **Are there any specific steps you're taking for the seniors for whom you provide home care and go into their homes?**

All staff who have in-person interaction with a participant are required to wear an N95 mask. We also require staff to follow guidance on the use of N95s and other personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide the maximal protection and safety for all participants and staff.

- **What kind of plan does InnovAge have in place for caring for participants with COVID-19?**
InnovAge has a detailed control plan that outlines specific actions to ensure the safety of our participants and staff. In addition, we follow all local, state, and federal guidance around COVID-19.
- **Are there any plans to provide dental hygiene and other on-site medical services under the current circumstances?**
Care teams are able to provide services such as dental, hearing, and vision if they are determined to be necessary in individualized care plans. While centers are closed, these will be provided at the participant's home or at a contracted care facility if staff are allowed to enter the facility.

CARE FACILITIES

- **You work with many facilities – hospitals, independent and assisted living facilities, skilled nursing facilities. What are you doing to ensure they are following control protocols? What if you discover they aren't; what will you do/are you prepared? How do you ensure those seniors receive the care they need?**
As part of InnovAge's quality control and contractual agreements, every facility we work with agrees to be part of our quality plan. Under these agreements, facilities are expected to comply with the same requirements and guidelines that InnovAge follows. If we find deficiencies, facility agreements may be terminated, and InnovAge works with caregivers and participants to find them other appropriate facilities.
- **How do you plan to take care of participants in facilities?**
Our care teams are seeing participants as needed in assisted living facilities and contracted skilled nursing facilities. We'll continue to coordinate the care of our participants with these facilities, following infection control guidelines and regulations.

MENTAL HEALTH

➤ **What is being done for participants who may be having mental health issues due to isolation?**

InnovAge's therapists, doctors, social workers, and behavioral health case managers are in contact with participants to assess and address mental health status. In addition, wellness calls include prompts to encourage participants to be open about their concerns in this area. To help combat isolation, we are providing virtual services such as activity kits, Zoom activities and classes, and more. These are designed to help keep participants engaged and active. We are also working on new programs around exercising, to be designed using input from participants.