



## COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Staff

Vaccines are now available to Beth Israel Lahey Health (BILH) staff who are at greatest risk of exposure to COVID-19 based on where they work. The following information will help to answer many common questions so you can be confident in your decision to receive the vaccine.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How effective is the vaccine at preventing COVID-19?**

**A:** The vaccines currently authorized for use were found to be **at least 94 percent effective** in preventing COVID-19 among clinical trial participants.

**Q: How bad are the side effects of the vaccine?**

**A:** Like most vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine may cause some reactions, but **the chance of having a severe reaction is much lower than the chance of catching COVID-19.**

Everyone who gets the vaccine is monitored for at least 15 minutes to watch for any immediate side effects, like an allergic reaction, which can be treated quickly.

After that, you might have soreness in your arm where the shot was given or other mild symptoms, like fever or body aches, which may last for one or two days. These symptoms may be treated with Tylenol if they occur.



**Q: Are there more severe reactions to the vaccine?**

**A: The trials have not revealed more serious complications of vaccination.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continue to closely monitor any reported reactions. BILH will share any new information regarding the vaccine as it becomes available.

**Q: If I get side effects that keep me out of work, will I get paid?**

**A:** Staff members who develop moderate to severe symptoms that interfere with their daily activities should report to Employee Health and remain out of work until symptoms go away and they are cleared to return. **In these situations, staff will be paid for the first 48 hours they are out of work after vaccination.**



**Q: Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A:** While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. If you get COVID-19, you may spread the disease to patients, family, friends and others around you without even knowing it. **COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience illness**

**Q: I don't want the vaccine now but I might change my mind. Can I get the vaccine later?**

**A:** Yes. Even if you defer the original invitation to get the vaccine, you can schedule an appointment later by following the instructions on the second page.

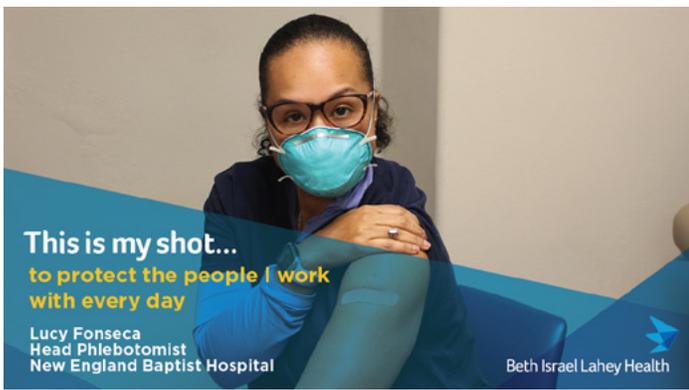
**Q: How do we know the vaccines for COVID-19 are safe and effective?**

**A: COVID-19 vaccines go through the same testing process as all other vaccines to ensure they are safe and effective.** The process starts with testing in laboratories. Then, the results of the lab testing are reviewed by expert scientists and doctors who are not part of the government or the companies that make the vaccine.

If these experts believe a vaccine may be safe, the FDA reviews the data and decides whether the vaccine can be tested in human volunteers, a process known as clinical trials, involving thousands of people. This process is carefully designed to determine the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and other medications.

After the trials are completed, the FDA evaluates clinical trial results and if favorable, issues an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Then, another independent group of medical experts carefully reviews all of the data and advises the CDC whether to recommend the vaccine for use.

**All COVID-19 vaccines that are being given in the United States and at BILH have passed all of these steps.** In addition, a group of infectious disease experts from academic hospitals across Massachusetts have reviewed the same data as the FDA and recommended the vaccines for use.



**Q: How did the COVID-19 vaccines become available so quickly?**

**A:** There are many reasons why COVID-19 vaccines became available more quickly than normal.

First, the government made it easier for companies that make vaccines to submit paperwork and contracts to begin the vaccine development and testing process.

In addition, the government provided funding to these companies so they could start making the vaccines before they were authorized for use. Normally, vaccines are not produced until final approval is received.

Once vaccines are available, the process of distributing the vaccine to hospitals and doctor's offices is usually managed by each company independently. With the COVID-19 vaccines, the process was standardized and vaccines were quickly delivered to each state.

Together, these improvements, known as Operation Warp Speed, enabled a process that normally takes several years to be completed in just a few months. It's important to remember that although some steps were completed more quickly than for other vaccines, the safety evaluations went through all of the typical required steps for authorization.

**“The speed was based on very exquisite, scientific advances and an enormous amount of resources that were put into Operation Warp Speed to make this happen. There was no compromise of safety, nor was there compromise of scientific integrity.”**

**Dr. Anthony Fauci**  
Director of the National Institute  
of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

## True or False?

**It's possible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine.**

**False:** None of the vaccines contain a live COVID-19 virus, so you can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

**People who already had COVID-19 don't need the vaccine.**

**False:** Even if you had COVID-19 before, you should still get the vaccine because we don't know how long after an infection you are protected from catching COVID-19 again. People who have an active COVID-19 infection should wait until they have completed the home isolation period and been cleared by Employee Health to return to work.

**The COVID-19 vaccine is free for BILH clinicians and staff.**

**True:** There is no cost for BILH clinicians and staff.

**I can stop wearing a mask after getting the vaccine.**

**False:** The vaccine takes time to begin working. It can take around two weeks after the final shot for the vaccine to be fully effective. Also, after you've been vaccinated you may still catch COVID-19 and have mild or no symptoms yourself. Because you can still have the virus (even if it doesn't make you visibly sick) it's important to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing to make sure you do not give the virus to others who are not yet vaccinated. The combination of getting vaccinated and following **CDC's recommendations** to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

## Still have questions?

- Talk to your doctor
- Visit our Vaccine Information Website at [covid-19.bilh.org](https://covid-19.bilh.org)
- Call the new BILH Employee Health phone line at 617-278-8897, or send an email to [EmployeeHealth@bilh.org](mailto:EmployeeHealth@bilh.org)

## Three Easy Ways to Schedule Your Vaccine Appointment

1. Check for an email from [COVID-19vaccine\\_scheduling@bilh.org](mailto:COVID-19vaccine_scheduling@bilh.org). Click the link in the email to select a date and time for your appointment.
2. If you don't use email, ask your manager to help you schedule an appointment.
3. You can also call Employee Health at **617-278-8897** for help with appointment scheduling.



Beth Israel Lahey Health