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COVID-19 Vaccine CCSF Employee FAQs

A safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, coupled with continued preventive measures, is our best tool to end the COVID-19 pandemic and safely reopen San Francisco. Vaccine supply currently is very limited. As vaccine supply increases, more people will get the vaccine, including younger people and people at lower risk for complications from COVID-19. Most people will get the vaccine from their healthcare or insurance provider, later in 2021.

We have developed these FAQs to help provide answers with the information we have now. Administration of the vaccine is a quickly evolving process and will result in information changing frequently. Please check the [DHR COVID-19 webpage](#) for employee specific information or sf.gov for general information about COVID-19 and the vaccine.

ABOUT THE VACCINE

Is the vaccine voluntary?

Yes, but you are strongly encouraged to get the vaccine once it's available.

Is the vaccine free?

Yes, the vaccine is free of charge, but your insurance provider may pay a fee to the vaccine provider.

Where is the vaccine coming from?

Doses of the vaccine are being provided by the federal government to state governments. The vaccines being administered in San Francisco were provided by the State of California, the majority of which were directly sent to health providers.

The health providers in turn started vaccinating their health care workers. As vaccine becomes more available, they are vaccinating other health workers.

Will I be able to choose which vaccine I get?

No. The vaccine you receive will be based on what your health care provider has available.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are almost identical. They are both 95% effective at preventing you from getting sick from COVID-19. Both are two dose vaccines, with several weeks between the doses.

Do I need to take a COVID-19 test before I get the vaccine?

No, you do not need a COVID-19 test before getting a vaccine.

Do I still have to wear a mask after getting the vaccine?

Yes. It's possible for you to spread the virus even after getting the vaccine. The vaccine is designed to stop the virus from making you sick. We don't yet know if the vaccine will stop you from spreading the virus, but research continues to determine this.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION**How will the vaccine be administered?**

Under the [State distribution plan](#), the vaccine is shipped directly to healthcare providers. The plan includes the Department of Public Health, which is a healthcare provider in the City.

Most people will get the vaccine from their healthcare provider (Kaiser, Sutter, UCSF etc.) or a local participating pharmacy, later in 2021. The Department of Public Health is a healthcare provider for clinics and hospitals within the San Francisco Health Network (Southeast Health Center, Castro-Mission Health Center, Chinatown Public Health Center etc.) not for city employees.

Why is the vaccine being administered by healthcare providers?

As directed by state guidelines and in the interest of vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible, the vaccine is being offered through both the City and healthcare providers. Most people will receive the vaccine through their existing healthcare provider. San Francisco Department of Public Health is working to ensure that vulnerable populations and those that do not have access to private healthcare also have access to the vaccine.

Who is responsible for determining who gets the vaccine first?

Many of the decisions regarding vaccine allocation are driven by the state and federal governments, including the timing and amount of vaccine a county receives. California has developed a distribution plan for the vaccine, which San Francisco is following. The distribution prioritizes public facing roles earlier in the distribution.

Which distribution phase do I belong in?

As the supply of COVID-19 vaccines is still limited, the state is prioritizing populations that are most at risk of getting COVID-19 from their job, as well as older or vulnerable people. The distribution plan has been split into phases (1a, 1b, 1c), with the general priorities focused on roles and job category. Currently most healthcare systems are still vaccinating people in the 1a category. The current list of those included in which phase and tier are posted on the [California Department of Public Health website](#). This may be updated in the future.

The City has also created a [vaccination notification website](#) where people who live or work in San Francisco can sign up to be notified when they become eligible under state guidance to receive the vaccine.

How will I know when I can get the vaccine?

The state and local public health departments have advised healthcare providers to notify patients as soon as vaccine appointments become available in their tier. There is no uniform or singular communication system. How healthcare providers reach out may vary depending on what personal

contact information you have provided them and the communications system they have put in place.

In accordance with the [State distribution plan](#), departments will notify City employees which tier they fall under based on their job classification and other criteria. In general, they will be invited to schedule a vaccination appointment when their tier is ready and there is vaccine available.

You may also check the [SFPD website](#) for announcements about upcoming COVID-19 vaccine availability at pharmacies and other venues as more vaccination sites become available.

How will vaccines be provided equitably?

San Francisco is following California guidelines in administering the vaccine as they become available. The Community Vaccine Advisory Committee is providing input and feedback to the planning efforts and resolving barriers to equitable vaccine implementation and decision-making. See CDPH's [committee activities page](#) for the upcoming meeting schedule and all meeting materials.

To further ensure equity in access to the vaccine, Mayor London Breed recently announced plans to open high-volume vaccination sites in San Francisco which will be ready as more vaccine supply becomes available. Those sites will be located at Moscone Center, City College of San Francisco's main campus in OMI, and the SF Wholesale Produce Market in Bayview.

COMPENSATION AND LEAVE

Can I use sick leave when I go to my vaccination appointment?

Yes. Employees that are getting the vaccine through their personal health care providers may use accrued sick leave for these medical appointments.

If I get sick from the vaccine and must take time off from work, can I use the City provided COVID sick leave?

Yes. This is a very well tolerated vaccine, and mild reactions, if any, are seen more often after the second dose. Employees can use a portion of their one-time allocation of COVID-19 sick leave or personal accrued sick leave for side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will I receive additional COVID-related sick leave?

At this time plans to provide City employees with additional COVID-19 paid leaves benefits are uncertain.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

City and County of San Francisco Vaccine FAQs: <https://sf.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/VaccineFAQs-011321-v2.pdf>

CA Department of Public Health Healthcare Workers' FAQ: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/HealthWorkersVaccineFAQs.pdf>