

# COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION



## WHAT IS A COVID-19 VACCINE?

A vaccine is a medicine that you usually get in a shot. It protects you from getting a disease, so in this case, it protects you from getting coronavirus or COVID-19.

## IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE FOR PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME?

The **Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group**, (whom the NDSC trusts), supports the recommendation that people with Down syndrome receive the **COVID-19 vaccine**. They say, "The vaccine is a safe path to which we can reduce symptomatic COVID-19, save lives, and return more rapidly to the many aspects of our lives that have been altered"



## HOW WILL THE COVID-19 VACCINE HELP?

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine **benefits individuals** and will stop the spread of the virus in the **community**.

- Approved vaccines make it less likely you will get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated may make symptoms not as bad if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated will help protect people around you, including older people, people with disabilities, and those with other health conditions.

## CAN CHILDREN GET THE VACCINE?

The current vaccines available are **not** recommended for any children **under the age of 16** at this point (1). There are some **research** sites enrolling children down to 12 years old for vaccine trials, so you may want to look for these options in your area if you are interested.



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## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EVERYONE GETTING VACCINATING?

- Individuals who live in group homes who have been **away from family** and friends will be able to **reunite** with them, and their support network.
- School systems will no longer require **remote learning**.
- Transition to adulthood programs can operate again and **promote independence** and supports.
- People who need **therapies and support services** will be able to get them again.
- **Caregivers** will have the help that they need.
- Businesses that have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic will recover, creating **more job opportunities** for those with disabilities to find gainful employment.

## SHOULD I WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE THAT I LIVE WITH CAN GET THE VACCINE?

No, there is **no reason to wait**. There will likely continue to be a slow roll-out of the vaccines over the coming weeks to months, so not everyone in your household may be able to get the vaccinations at the same time. It is advised that those who can receive the vaccine **do so as soon as possible**.



## IF YOU GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE CAN YOU STOP WEARING A MASK?

The vaccine **protects the vaccinated person**, but people who are vaccinated can still spread the virus to others. To protect yourself and others, the CDC encourages those vaccinated to **continue to**:

- **Wear a mask** over your nose and mouth.
- Stay at least **6 feet away** from others.
- Avoid **crowds**.
- Avoid poorly **ventilated spaces**.
- **Wash your hands** often.

## WHO DECIDES WHEN I CAN GET THE VACCINE?

Each **state determines** when the people who live there will get the vaccine. States have already started giving the vaccine, but many are still **changing** their distribution schedules. Contact your **state's Department of Health** to see when people with Down syndrome are scheduled to get the vaccine.



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## HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN CAN I GET THE VACCINE?

If you have questions about your state's schedule for vaccination distribution contact your state's **Department of Health** to see when **people with Down syndrome** are scheduled to get the vaccine. If you are concerned that it is taking too long in your state for people with Down syndrome to get the vaccine it is possible to **advocate to receive the vaccine sooner**.

## HOW CAN I ADVOCATE SO THAT MY STATE MAKES ME A PRIORITY?

If people with **Down syndrome** in your state are not receiving priority in COVID-19 vaccine distribution, you should contact your legislators and public health officials to tell them about the **CDC's addition** of people with Down syndrome to the list of those at higher risk of hospitalization or even death. You can also tell them that you need for your **caregiver to also** be protected.

You may also reach out to your state's **Developmental Disabilities Council**, Protection & **Advocacy** organization, local or state Down syndrome group, or other statewide organizations that serve people with **intellectual & developmental** disabilities, to get information and join in their advocacy efforts.



## PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDED INFORMATION

### SOURCES:

- [DSMIG-USA IDD COVID-19 Vaccination Position Statement](#)
- [The Autism Society of America and National Disability Organizations Encourage the Autism and I/DD Community to be Prioritized for COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [ScienceMag.org: COVID-19 is 10 times deadlier for people with Down syndrome, raising calls for early vaccination](#)
- [CDC: Certain Medical Conditions and Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness](#)
- [Q&A on COVID-19 and Down Syndrome](#) in collaboration with our national partners, Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group, GLOBAL Down Syndrome Foundation, LuMind IDSC, National Down Syndrome Society, National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices.

