

Frequently Asked Questions

10/07/2021

Where may I read the vaccination policy?

The vaccination policy is located in the Employee Handbook, Section 8.10. (<https://my.uiw.edu/hr/employee-handbook.html>)

To whom does the vaccination policy apply?

The vaccine mandate applies to UIW employees, vendors and paid consultants working on campus with any frequency, except for emergency services or repairs, including those engaged in daily operations or delivery of services.

Will the vaccine be mandatory for UIW students or student employees?

No. This policy does not apply to students. Student employees whose employment status derives from their student status are excluded from this policy.

How do I provide documentation of my COVID-19 vaccination from another provider?

Employees shall submit their vaccination status via Cardinal Apps (<https://apps.uiw.edu>) and select the free Med+Proctor application. Instructions are available by clicking [here](#) or [Med+Proctor Instructions](#).

Will all UIW community members be eligible for the vaccine?

All students, faculty, staff, and family members are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination. You may arrange for a vaccine by calling Health Services at 210-829-6017.

Which vaccine should I receive?

You should receive a qualifying vaccine, which includes those approved for use in the U.S. and by the World Health Organization (WHO).

How many doses will I need to get?

Two of the U.S. approved vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, require two consecutive doses, three or four weeks apart, for the vaccine series to be complete. Employees can elect to receive any one of the three approved vaccines. A booster vaccine is authorized for Pfizer and may be authorized for the Moderna vaccine later this fall 2021, under qualifying circumstances as set out by the CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

How long will the vaccine appointment take?

Vaccination appointments will take approximately 30 minutes, including a 15-minute observation period after receiving the vaccine.

What do I need to bring with me to my vaccine appointment?

Please bring your employee ID and a government issued ID, such as a driver's license, military ID, or passport.

If I get the vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask on campus?

All individuals are required to wear face masks in all UIW buildings. This requirement applies to all students, faculty, staff, administrators, and visitors regardless of vaccination status. Masks will not be required on-campus in individual residence hall rooms or while alone in private offices.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

There are many strict protections in place and steps taken during vaccine development to ensure that any vaccine authorized for use is proven to be safe and effective. Vaccine developers are required to go through a rigorous, multi-stage process including large (phase III) trials that involve tens of thousands of participants. More than 375 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the United States from December 14, 2020, through September 7, 2021. Adverse events occurred in 0.003% of cases. More than 70,000 people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities participated in the COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. Clinical trials for the three vaccines included White, Hispanic/Latino, Black, Asian, and other races/ethnicities.

After the clinical trials show that the vaccines are safe and effective, a series of independent reviews and evidence are required to demonstrate efficacy and safety. The FDA is responsible for making sure that FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Recently, the FDA has fully approved the Pfizer vaccine. While other vaccines have not yet received full FDA approval, all three U.S. approved vaccines are considered safe.

Do the vaccines cause side effects?

There is potential for injection site reactions (redness, swelling, and pain) as well as fever, fatigue, headache, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, and/or joint pain. These are adverse reactions commonly seen with other vaccines. There may be other reactions that are not currently known. If you are receiving a two-dose vaccine, it is important that you receive the second dose to ensure the vaccine is effective, even if you experience side effects after the first dose.

If you have a severe allergic reaction following the first dose of a two-dose vaccine course, such as anaphylaxis, you should speak with your physician about whether you should receive the second dose. The incidence of this occurring is low, occurring in about one in six million doses.

Should I get the vaccine if I have allergies?

You can receive the vaccine if you have allergies to injectable medicines, antibiotics, pets, environmental substances, or foods. The three U.S. approved COVID-19 vaccines do not contain egg protein and are safe for people who have egg allergies. If you have questions about allergies, your doctor can help you determine if the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks.

If I had COVID-19 and recovered, should I get the vaccine within 90 days of contracting the virus?

Yes. Early findings suggest natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last long or necessarily protect you against the newer variants. There is sufficient vaccine supply. There is no harm in getting vaccinated as long as you are symptom free and out of isolation.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective for pregnant people and their babies?

The COVID-19 vaccine protects you and your baby from severe health complications due to COVID-19. Vaccinations with one of the approved COVID-19 vaccines are [not associated with increased risks to your pregnancy, including miscarriages or poor pregnancy outcomes](https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding). (See <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>)

We also respect the unique and personal wishes people have to control healthcare decisions during pregnancy. Having a discussion with your obstetrician is important. Some of the recent reports in unvaccinated positive COVID-19 pregnant women show an increase in stillbirths and maternal deaths.

Should I get the vaccine if I am breastfeeding?

Yes. ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists) recommends that breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine. There is no need to stop breastfeeding if you want to get a vaccine. When you get vaccinated, the antibodies made by your body may be passed through breastmilk and may help protect your child from the virus.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine make me infertile/sterile?

No. There is no evidence to suggest the vaccines cause infertility or affects your ability to become pregnant. The proteins are not similar, nor do they impact fertility or affect a pregnancy. The vaccine manufacturers are monitoring people in the clinical trials who became pregnant.

Is COVID-19 similar to the flu?

COVID-19 is significantly more dangerous than the flu and is 10 times more likely to cause death than the flu. There can be very serious long-term effects from COVID-19, with some individuals developing “long-hauler syndrome.” Persons with long-hauler syndrome exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the post recovery phase.

Does the vaccine change my DNA?

COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. All COVID-19 vaccines work with the body’s natural defenses to safely develop immunity to COVID-19. The vaccines deliver genetic material to our cells, which gives them instructions to build protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. The genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA.

What if I prefer to wait until Moderna or Johnson & Johnson is fully approved by the FDA before receiving the vaccine?

You may choose any of the three U.S. approved vaccines. All three vaccines are deemed safe. Unless you have been granted an accommodation under this policy, there will be no extension or extra time granted because of vaccines preference.

What if I fail to receive the vaccine before the due date?

Employees who fail to meet the deadline will be issued a warning to comply in accordance with the policy. Employees who fail to comply with this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

What if I am terminated for non-compliance? What resources do I have?

The COVID-19 Vaccine Policy can be found in Section 8.10 of the Employee Handbook. Employees discharged due to a violation of Section 8.10 may file a grievance pursuant to Section 12.7 of the Employee Handbook.

How do I file an accommodation request to be exempt from the vaccine provision in this policy?

A request for an accommodation under this policy will follow UIWs existing accommodation request protocols. Employees seeking an accommodation due to a disability or sincerely held religious belief, must complete the applicable form ([Disability Accommodation Request Form](#) or [Religious Accommodation Request Form](#)) in its entirety and send it to the Office of Human Resources no later than October 15, 2021.

What if I have other questions or concerns not addressed here or in the policy?

Questions concerning this policy can be directed to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources or submitted via email to [UIW COVID-19 Question Form](#).