

Sept. 17, 2021

To All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

As influenza season approaches and vaccine providers across Ohio prepare to offer flu vaccinations, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) would like to share the following recommendations and best practices for administering COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

Every flu season is different, and influenza can affect people differently, but every year millions of people get flu, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized with flu, and thousands to tens of thousands of people die from flu-related causes. Timing of the onset and peak of influenza activity can vary from season to season, with the highest peaks typically from December through March. Because increased activity can occur as early as October, flu vaccinations should be offered ideally by the end of October.

COVID-19 and influenza can result in serious illness, hospitalization, or death. Both COVID-19 and flu vaccines have been shown to reduce these serious outcomes. This is a message we ask healthcare providers and public health officials to continue to reinforce with Ohioans.

Both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered to eligible patients during the same visit, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP). In addition to flu vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine can be coadministered with other vaccines. Even though multiple vaccines can be given during the same visit, people should follow the recommended schedule for each product:

- [Annual influenza vaccination](#) is recommended for all people age 6 months and older with a vaccine product that is appropriate for the individual's age and health status. Several [different types of flu vaccines](#) are available.
- COVID-19 vaccine eligibility is product specific.
 - Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty (two doses, 21 days apart): 12 years old and older.
 - Moderna (two doses, 28 days apart): 18 years old and older.
 - Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) (single dose): 18 years old and older.
 - An [additional, or third, dose](#) of Pfizer or Moderna can be administered to strengthen the immune response in individuals with moderate or severe immunocompromised conditions who completed the original mRNA series. An additional dose is not recommended at this time for Janssen recipients. ODH will share an update if that recommendation changes following further evaluation.
 - ODH will share updated recommendations if/when COVID-19 booster doses are authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and recommended for use by the CDC.

Guidance for vaccine providers

- CDC guidance supports coadministration of COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, including influenza vaccines, without regard to timing.

- Previously, CDC guidance recommended healthcare professionals administer COVID-19 vaccine alone. This earlier recommendation was out of an abundance of caution during a period when these vaccines were new and was not based on known safety or immunogenicity concerns. However, substantial data have now been collected regarding the safety of COVID-19 vaccines currently approved or authorized by FDA.
- Coadministration of all recommended vaccines is important because it increases the probability that an individual will be current on required and recommended vaccinations.
- Best practices for administering more than one vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines and influenza vaccines, include:
 - When preparing more than one vaccine, label each with the name and dosage (amount) of vaccine, lot number, the initials of the preparer, and the exact beyond-use time, if applicable.
 - Always inject vaccines into different injection sites.
 - Separate injection sites by 1 inch or more, if possible, so that any local reactions can be differentiated. Each muscle (deltoid, vastus lateralis) has multiple injection sites.
 - If administered at the same time, COVID-19 vaccines and vaccines that might be more likely to cause a local injection site reaction (for example, high-dose and adjuvanted inactivated influenza vaccines) should be administered in different arms (or legs), if possible.
- If patients ask about side effects, while limited data exist on giving COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, general experience with giving other vaccines together demonstrates that possible side effects are generally similar whether vaccines are given alone or with other vaccines.

CDC resources for providers:

- [Pink Book: Vaccine Administration](#)
- [You Call The Shots: Vaccinating Adolescents](#)
- [Vaccine Administration Training Module](#)
- [Vaccine Administration: Needle Gauge and Length](#)
- [Vaccine Administration: Intramuscular \(IM\) Injection Children 7 through 18 years of age](#)
- [Vaccine Administration: Intramuscular \(IM\) Injection Adults 19 years of age and older](#)

For more information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov. If you have any questions or issues, please contact our vaccine provider relations team between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at 1-844-9ODHVAX (1-844-963-4829) or email COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,
Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine team