



## Pandemic Response Committee COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

### **VACCINE**

**Q.** What is the level of effectiveness of the vaccine?

**A.** Effective is measured by what we call efficacy. Efficacy basically means it works that percent of the time. Pfizer/Moderna have about 85-95% efficacy, so it stops very serious disease about that percent of the time. That doesn't mean you won't get the disease, but rarely (only 5-15%) of the time. That's very important. The vaccine also means if you get the disease, it will be less serious than if you don't have the vaccine.

**Q.** Does the vaccine prevent me from getting COVID or passing it on to others?

**A.** It decreases your risk of getting and spreading the virus. Should you contract the virus, getting the vaccine greatly decreases your risk of serious symptoms and hospitalization than those without the vaccine. It does not mean you won't get the disease; it most likely means you will not get the long haulers' disease.

**Q.** If you've already had COVID do you need the vaccine? If yes, why, and how many doses do you need?

**A.** Yes, studies have shown the level of antibodies is greater with the vaccine than those having the virus by itself. The level of protection is increased with both natural infection and the vaccine. You need two (2) doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine OR one (1) dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

**Q.** What kind of reaction will I get from the vaccine?

**A.** People are experiencing different side effects. Most people experience, fatigue, sore arm, body ache or slight fever. Some people experience more severe symptoms. This is your body's normal response to the vaccine and is an indicator that the antibodies are working.

**Q.** My reaction to the first vaccine dose was not good. Is there data to suggest this will happen again?

**A.** We need to understand what you mean by not good. If you mean the type of side effects in the above question, those are common effects of antibody development. One can have more serious effects, called anaphylaxis, where you get lightheaded, and your blood pressure drops. That is the most serious immediate reaction, and the reason you are asked to wait for 15-30 minutes before you leave the vaccination site.

**Q.** Is the mandated vaccine just for campus staff or for corporate as well?

**A.** As a health care organization, the vaccine is mandated for all Crestwood staff.

**Q.** Is it fair that I'm vaccinated but my co-worker is not? This makes me feel unsafe.

**A.** I am not sure what you mean by fair, but we have no choice, according to the mandate. It is fair, in the sense that the government mandate has put in the necessary precautions to keep everyone safe including more frequent testing for unvaccinated staff.

**Q.** What is the efficacy of the vaccine regarding the Delta Variant?

**A.** The efficacy of the Pfizer/Moderna is approximately 65% for the Delta Variant and the Johnson is about 50% for the Johnson. It is less than for the Alpha variant, the first type of Coronavirus. However, when coupled with social distancing and masking, we can still control the Delta variant.

**Q.** You mention that the vaccine was studied more thoroughly than other vaccines and medications. Can it truly be considered thorough if there are no studies regarding the long-term effects of the vaccine?

**A.** Yes. Keep in mind that there are no studies of long-term effects of medications. This has been especially true since the 1980s when the FDA allowed certain medications to be released earlier. You can't have long-term studies of medications until the medications are released. Prozac is a good example. Many of the side effects of Prozac, like the manic switch, were found after it was released. Similarly, the side effects of the Pepcid were not found for years afterwards.



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**Q.** Has Crestwood checked the bioethics violations addressed by the inventor of the mRNA technology?  
**A.** Yes. We have followed both the Johns Hopkins and Harvard review of Dr. Malone's bioethics concern. He is clearly a brilliant scientist, at one time. He overstates his long-term impact on mRNA but his concerns have been reviewed. We are willing to discuss them.

**Q.** What vaccines are FDA approved? For the one's that are not approved, why?  
**A.** Most vaccines eventually get FDA approval, like the Shingles, Polio, and Flu vaccines. Except for the polio vaccine, these were not developed during a public health crisis. The Coronavirus vaccine was released before its approval was administratively completed was a response to two things. The first was the rapid response to vaccine development which was funded by the federal government. This rapid response was fully scientifically rigorous and complete. It was not short-changed in any way. The second response was due to the public health crisis the world was facing. We had to act quickly. The second response forced the first response.

**Q.** Who will determine the vaccine for immunocompromised residents?  
**A.** The CDC will determine who will get the vaccine for immunocompromised persons. You can find the list on the CDC website. However, since the booster is being released, more persons than just immunocompromised persons.

### **BOOSTER**

**Q.** How was it determined the booster is necessary?  
**A.** It was determined the booster was necessary when the literature recognized antibodies were beginning to begin to decrease after the vaccinations. All vaccines only last for a limited period, except polio or tuberculosis, and a few others. Most vaccines last a limited time in the body, and those antibody levels must be renewed. This is the reason for boosters. We did not know if that would be true with mRNA viruses since this was a relatively new technology. As time continued, it has become clear that we must renew antibodies, and that's why boosters work.

**Q.** How effective is the booster?  
**A.** The booster will increase the antibodies up to 10x, which will help protect the person from disease. The understanding is the higher the antibodies, the greater the protection. Given our success with the vaccines, this thinking is probably true. As time goes on, we will see that certain antibodies will be more effective than other antibodies.

**Q.** Will this year's flu shot need to be timed with the COVID booster?  
**A.** It is recommended to have 1 month in between the flu shot and the booster.

**Q.** If the vaccine wears off and I don't get a booster, how protected am I and others?  
**A.** You are not protected. If your antibodies fall below a current level, yet undetermined, you will need to start over with vaccination rather than boosters.

**Q.** Will Crestwood provide the booster to staff?  
**A.** We can't answer this, but if we are providing vaccination to staff, it is likely we will provide boosters as well, since this is like flu.

**Q.** Will the Crestwood travel requirements and quarantine be updated to reflect the booster given?  
**A.** We believe it will.

**Q.** Does Crestwood consider me fully vaccinated even though the effectiveness of the vaccine is gone?  
**A.** As of this date, the CDC considers "Fully Vaccinated" as staff who have received 2 doses of Moderna or Pfizer or 1 dose of J&J followed by 14-days.



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**Q.** Is the booster required at Crestwood?

**A.** We have not received official guidance yet from CDC or CDPH regarding the booster. When we receive that guidance, we will decide on how we will proceed as an organization and communicate that to our Crestwood village.

### **LEGAL/LABOR LAW**

**Q.** How are the exemptions determined?

**A.** All exemptions are to remain confidential. Exemption requests should go to the department supervisor who will forward to HR. HR reviews each request and will communicate with Department supervisor the determination. Medical determinations for exemption do not require a diagnosis. It requires a simple statement from your physician that they do not recommend the vaccine be administered.

**Q.** What do I do if I feel I should not get the vaccine due to a medical condition?

**A.** Consult with your physician who will make the determination and complete the medical exemption form.

**Q.** Is there a reasonable accommodation for those who don't claim medical or religious exemptions but do not want to take the vaccine?

**A.** At this point, the only exemptions are medical or religious. Requests for accommodation are handled on a case-by-case basis. If in doubt, please complete the Accommodation Request Form so that it can be evaluated.

**Q.** How do I request a religious accommodation?

**A.** In order to request a religious exemption, you must first complete the Vaccination Accommodation Request Form and return it to your supervisor who will provide it to the campus Administrator. The form will be sent to HR for review. In certain cases, HR may need to reach out to you for clarifying questions. Campus leadership will notify you of the approval or denial of the request.

**Q.** Will the supplemental paid sick leave be extended for those who must get the booster?

**A.** This is unknown currently. We do not yet have guidance if a booster will be required and do not yet know the state's plan for extending CA Supplemental Sick time.

**Q.** What will happen if I decline due to religious beliefs?

**A.** You will need to follow complete the Accommodation request form. If approved, you be required to:

1. Test for COVID-19 with PCR test that either has Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or be operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Testing must occur twice weekly for unvaccinated exempt workers in acute health care (SNFs) and long-term care settings, and once weekly or 72 hours prior to visit the office/facility (whichever applies) for such workers in other health care settings and in the home office settings (Capitol Mall, Shoreline, San Diego).
2. Wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), such as an N95 filtering facepiece respirator, always while in the facility/office. See return to office guidance updated 8/31/2021

**Q.** How does all this respect my constitutional rights and liberties? Is the mandate law?

**A.** Both the California Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court have held that State-mandated vaccines are constitutional.



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**Q.** Did Crestwood seek legal advice to challenge the mandate?

**A.** Crestwood believes the mandate for healthcare workers to be vaccinated protects workers, persons served, and the community. Crestwood does not intend to challenge the mandate and does not believe such a challenge would be successful.

**Q.** If you choose not to get the vaccine will it be considered a termination or resignation?

**A.** If an employee has no intention of getting the vaccine and does not submit a request for medical or religious exemption, then there is no other choice but to separate employment. The separation will be coded as Involuntary-Refusal to Comply with State Vaccine Mandate

**Q.** Unvaccinated staff feel hostility and a form of discrimination. How will Crestwood protect those employees?

**A.** All employees should be treated professionally and with compassion – consistent with our values. Therefore, vaccinated and unvaccinated employees should be treated the same (except for accommodation requirements and any safety protocols). If you feel that you are not being treated consistent with our values, please speak with your supervisor or your chain of command. If you are unsuccessful in obtaining assistance from your leadership chain or have question, feel free to contact your home office HR partner.

**Q.** If an unvaccinated person passes COVID to me and I get critically ill or die, who is held responsible?

**A.** We are not aware of any law that makes a person (vaccinated or unvaccinated) responsible for unintentionally passing a disease to another person. You should consult your own attorney if you believe you have a claim against someone for passing COVID to you.

**Q.** Who is liable if someone is injured or dies from the vaccine?

**A.** We are not aware of any deaths because of the vaccine and any side effects of the vaccine are far milder than COVID symptoms. If you believe you sustained an injury because of the required vaccination, you may submit a workers compensation claim, which will be handled like other workers comp claims.

**Q.** What will happen if an employee misses the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for full vaccination?

**A.** Crestwood does not have the ability to waive the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline in that it was set by the State mandate. We encourage you to meet the deadline, particularly since vaccines are now readily available. Crestwood will review any missed deadlines on a case-by-case basis.

**Q.** Does Crestwood need proof of vaccination?

**A.** The mandate requires us to verify vaccination status but not to keep a copy of the card.

**Q.** For those who are unable to vaccinate due to medical reason, are there additional steps being taken (vaccinated and unvaccinated staff) for testing the moment signs of COVID are detected regardless of vaccination status?

**A.** Yes. If you show symptoms (unvaccinated or vaccinated), you will quarantine and get tested. If unvaccinated, facility staff must wear an N95 OR a procedural mask and face shield (only required in client areas. Home office staff must wear a well-fitting mask. All staff are to follow the guidelines of hand hygiene, disinfecting and physical distance. See return to office guidance updated 8/31/2021

**Q.** Is the unvaccinated staff (that have exemptions) something management/supervisors can share internally with the rest of their department/staff, so others are aware in the event of an office work/events/meetings or is just something that is retained in employee file only.

**A.** No, exemptions should be kept confidential.



## **Pandemic Response Committee COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ**

### **TESTING**

**Q.** If one does have a vaccination exemption, do they get tested at work? Can we go to CVS, Walgreens or anyone that does COVID tests?

**A.** If your facility provides testing, it will be available at work. Yes, it is ok to go to community providers of the COVID test. The test must be verifiable PCR tests (no at home tests).

**Q.** Who is financially responsible to cover weekly testing?

**A.** There are many no cost options in the community and with health care providers.

**Q.** What type of test do I need to get if I am not vaccinated and have the medical or religious exemption?

**A.** Crestwood prefers the more accurate PCR test.