

# COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people—especially those who are boosted— from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying. As with other diseases, you are protected best from COVID-19 when you stay up to date with the recommended vaccines.

In addition to the information provided below, a wealth of material is available on the [RI Department of Health](#) and [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) vaccine web pages. At the end of this document, you will also find links to helpful resources for talking with others about the importance of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Overview

**All individuals coming to URI campuses are strongly encouraged to be Fully Up to Date with Vaccination** as defined by the State of Rhode Island (“the State”). For most, this means being Fully Vaccinated plus have a booster dose. Individuals who are not Fully Up to Date with Vaccination are encouraged to test regularly.

## Definitions

**Accepted Vaccine.** Any vaccine that was authorized for use in the United States at the time of administration.

**Affiliate.** Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University of Rhode Island, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, postdoctoral or other research fellows, professional program participants, adjunct teaching or clinical personnel, volunteers, employees and associates of the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not considered University Affiliates.

**Campus Host.** The individual or department hosting a Visitor, Affiliate, or Contractor coming to campus.

**Contractor.** For purposes of these guidelines, defined as companies and their employees, or individuals, whether referred as “contractors” or “vendors,” who provide goods and services to the university under a purchase order issued by the university or the state (or in some cases under a contractual engagement with the University).

**Employee.** Any person employed by the University of Rhode Island, including faculty, staff, and students as applicable, regardless of the source of funds within the University.

**Fully Vaccinated.** As defined by the state, someone who has received all recommended doses of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine and more than 14 days have passed since receipt of the final dose.

**Fully Up to Date with Vaccination.** As defined by the state, a person is fully up to date if:

- They are 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters; OR
- They are 5 to 17 years old and have completed the primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine; OR
- They had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (as evidenced by a positive antigen or PCR test).

**Visitor.** Any individual coming to URI’s campuses who is not a current University of Rhode Island student, faculty, staff, or University Affiliate. This includes, but is not limited to, job applicants, student guests and

family members, visiting lecturers, and individuals attending campus events. For purposes of these guidelines, contractors and vendors are not considered Visitors.

## Vaccine Program Management

### Vaccine eligibility

**People are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination in Rhode Island if they live, work, or go to school in Rhode Island.** This specifically includes university students even if their permanent home is outside Rhode Island.

There are some restrictions on receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and individuals should consult with their healthcare provider regarding any concerns related to underlying health conditions. Known considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine if they've received another vaccine (such as tetanus, MMR, etc.) in the past 14 days.
- The CDC advises waiting 90 days after monoclonal antibody or convalescent plasma treatment before receiving COVID-19 vaccine.
- Anyone currently infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation.

### Acceptable vaccine

URI will accept proof of any vaccine that was authorized for use in the United States at the time of administration. For vaccinations requiring two doses, students must have received both doses of the vaccine to meet the requirement. Proof of vaccination will also be required for anyone with a prior diagnosis of COVID-19.

URI will work with any international students who have not been vaccinated or may have received a vaccine that is not approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the World Health Organization to ensure they have access to vaccines at URI or a local vaccination center.

### Vaccine administration

If you are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine:

- To get vaccinated at a state-run site, please go to [vaccinateRI.org](https://vaccinateRI.org) or call 844-930-1779.
- Go to [C19VaccineRI.org](https://C19VaccineRI.org) to learn how to get vaccinated through a pharmacy or through a local or regional site.

**NOTE: Regardless of where you receive the vaccine, it is imperative that you keep a record of your vaccination and retain the vaccination card provided to you.** Those who receive their vaccine in Rhode Island can obtain a copy of their COVID-19 vaccine record by visiting [portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord](https://portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord).

### Proof of vaccination

As defined by the state, official COVID-19 vaccination verification documents acceptable to the university include:

- Your COVID-19 Vaccination Record card
- A printed or digital photo of the front and back of your COVID-19 Vaccination Record card

- A printed copy or screenshot of your COVID-19 vaccination record page from Rhode Island's Vaccine Record Lookup Portal at [portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord](https://portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord) or equivalent record from another state

## Covid Safety Standard for All Individuals Coming to Campus

All Students, Employees, Visitors, Affiliates, and Contractors are **PROHIBITED** from coming to campus if they have received a positive Covid-19 test result in the past 6 days (See [Isolation/Quarantine](#)) or if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (see [Self-Screening](#)). The Campus Host is responsible for ensuring their Visitors, Affiliates, and Contractors are informed of these requirements in advance. In addition, all individuals are required to comply with applicable university masking and social distancing requirements.

## Vaccination and Testing Requirements

Employees, students, Affiliates, Visitors and Contractors are subject to the following requirements and expectations for vaccination and/or testing.

**IMPORTANT:** University departments and programs may not implement additional vaccination and/or testing requirements without specific approval from the URI COVID-19 Task Force. When requesting approval to verify vaccination and/or testing status other than for Large Indoor Events, the requesting department should justify the need based on elevated risk factors such as (for example): greater person-to-person interaction than typical Campus Events, a significant portion of Attendees arriving from outside Rhode Island, or a larger than usual portion of participants at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 based on age, underlying medical conditions, or other factors.

### Students

To participate in any on-site or in-person courses and activities, **students at all URI campuses should be Fully Up to Date with Vaccination by the start of the academic term** and must indicate their vaccine status through the Health Services portal.

Additional information about the University's COVID-19 vaccination for students can be found at <https://web.uri.edu/healthservices/covid-19-vaccine-information/>. The portal may also be used for submitting vaccine documentation.

### Employees, Affiliates, and Contractors

**Employees are strongly encouraged to be Fully Up to Date with Vaccination** and submit documentation of their vaccination status. Employees who are not Fully Up to Date with Vaccination are encouraged to obtain testing regularly.

Additional information about the University's COVID-19 vaccination for Employees can be found at <https://web.uri.edu/healthservices/covid-19-vaccine-information/>. The portal may also be used for submitting vaccine documentation.

### Affiliates, Contractors, and Visitors

**Affiliates, Contractors, and Visitors coming to campus should be Fully Vaccinated or have a recent negative COVID test result.** However, hosts/venues are only required to verify visitors' vaccination/testing status for certain Large Indoor Events and other situations as approved by the COVID-19 Task Force. Otherwise, **Visitors are generally not required to show proof of vaccination/testing.**

## Verifying Vaccination Status

When verifying a Visitor or Affiliate's vaccination or testing status, the only record made should be a notation that the Visitor or Affiliate has complied with the university's vaccine/testing requirements. For reasons of confidentiality, no additional details should be recorded, and the host should not make or retain any copies of the individual's health records. For this reason, individuals should not be required to submit documentation in advance though they should be informed of the need to bring such documentation with them when coming to campus.

## Vaccine Safety

The federal government has been working since the start of the pandemic to make a COVID-19 vaccine available as soon as possible. This accelerated timeline is unprecedented and has raised concerns for some people that safety may be sacrificed in favor of speed. However, as with all vaccines, safety is a top priority. No steps involving safety have been skipped—COVID-19 vaccines are subject to the same standards as other vaccines to make sure they are safe. COVID-19 vaccines have been tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions. In addition, Rhode Island's COVID-19 Vaccine Subcommittee, made up of epidemiologists, primary care providers, pharmacists, pediatricians, long-term care advocates, ethicists, nonprofit leaders, school leaders, faith leaders, and others, conducted an independent review of the process for evaluating the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

### Effectiveness

Three COVID-19 vaccines are currently authorized for use in the United States, produced by Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines require two doses several weeks apart and are considered 95% effective when administered in accordance with their manufacturers' recommendations. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only a single dose and, while 66% effective at preventing moderate to severe disease, it is considered fully effective in preventing COVID-19-related hospitalization and death. And while no vaccine can guarantee 100% protection against the SARS CoV-2 virus, individuals who acquire an infection after receiving any of the available vaccines are likely to have a much milder course of disease.

Note that once you have received your final dose of a vaccine regimen, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection, not because the vaccine is ineffective.

**IMPORTANT:** These vaccines are intended to prevent you from becoming ill with COVID-19. It's not yet known if they prevent you from contracting asymptomatic COVID-19 and/or to what extent the vaccines keep you from transmitting SARS-CoV-2 to others after you've been exposed. This is why it is essential that you remain vigilant about measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 even after being vaccinated.

### Side Effects

None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. However, vaccines can cause your immune system to respond. This is a sign that the vaccine—and your body's immune system—is working. Based on information released about all three vaccines, we expect some people to have symptoms after vaccination. These symptoms may include fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle or joint pain, and soreness at the injection site, which can occur following COVID-19 vaccination. These symptoms may be more noticeable than those that occur with a

flu vaccine. This is completely normal and will clear up in a few days. Preliminary data suggests that these are more frequent and severe following the second dose and more so among younger persons compared to those who are older (>55 years).

**Cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell are not consistent with post-vaccination symptoms, and instead may be symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 or another infection.** If you have these symptoms, you must contact your healthcare provider right away.

### Adverse Reactions

Although rare, some individuals can have an allergic reaction after receiving a vaccine. If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination provider site, seek immediate medical care by calling 9-1-1. Additional information about adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine can be found at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html).

If someone has a severe allergic reaction after getting vaccinated, their vaccination provider will send a report to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). VAERS is a national system that collects reports from healthcare professionals, vaccine manufacturers, and the public about adverse events that happen after vaccination.

## Precautions After Vaccination

Individuals who've been vaccinated against COVID-19 must remain diligent in preventing further transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. **Despite receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, you cannot be assumed to have full, lasting immunity against reinfection. As indicated above, you remain at some risk of reinfection and of passing the virus on to others.** Additionally, studies are ongoing to determine how long immunity is conveyed by the vaccine.

### Preventive Measures

Like those who have recovered from COVID-19, those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine must still comply with URI's [requirements for daily Self-Screening](#) if coming to campus. Students, faculty, and staff must not come to campus if they are ill, even if they've previously had COVID-19 or received the vaccine and should contact their healthcare provider right away.

### Testing

Students have access to same day testing at URI Health Services if they are symptomatic, exposed, or advised by a healthcare provider to obtain a COVID test. All others should obtain testing by contacting their primary healthcare provider, urgent clinic, or by visiting one of the community testing centers if they are symptomatic or have been exposed. Home tests are also widely available at retail pharmacies.

See [Self-Screening](#) for instructions on reporting illness. Note that the vaccine cannot cause you to test positive for COVID-19 though it could potentially result in a positive test for COVID-19 antibodies.

### Isolation and Quarantine

See URI's [Isolation and Quarantine](#) guidelines and requirements for more information.

## Talking with Others About Vaccination

To ensure as many people as possible are vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, it's important that everyone have accurate, factual information at their disposal. When it comes to talking to others about COVID-19 vaccination, the CDC offers a number of helpful resources. The CDC's [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#) page provides a good summary of the reasons you should be vaccinated. They also offer a vaccination [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page and a [Myths & Facts](#) page. For questions specific to Rhode Island, you can also visit the Department of Health's [COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.