

State Moves Up People with Medical Conditions for COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/covid-19-vaccine-drivethru-latimes-s5.jpg>



Date moved up to March 22 due to availability of appointments and increased vaccine supply.

MADISON — Gov. Evers and the Department of Health Services (DHS) announced today that individuals age 16 and older with certain medical conditions will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine beginning March 22, which is earlier than previously expected. This eligibility group includes individuals with medical conditions associated with an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.



“Our vaccinators across the state are doing great work to get folks vaccinated and get this done, and because of their good work, Wisconsin continues to be a national leader in getting shots in arms,” said Gov. Evers. “Moving up eligibility for this critical group will help us get over the finish line and sooner, and get us back to our Wisconsin way of life.”

The next eligibility group which will begin March 22, 2021 includes individuals age 16 and over with the following medical conditions:

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- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Diabetes
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant, blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Liver disease
- Neurologic conditions, such as intellectual disabilities and dementia
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30-39 kg/m²)
- Overweight (BMI of 25-29 kg/m²)
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Severe Obesity (BMI 40 kg/m² or more)
- Sickle cell disease
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)

Current Eligibility Includes

- Frontline health care personnel
- Residents and staff in skilled nursing and assisted living facilities
- Police and fire personnel, correctional staff
- Age 65 and older
- Educators and Child care
- Individuals enrolled in Medicaid Long-term care programs
- Some public facing essential workers
- Non-frontline essential health care personnel
- Staff and residents in congregate living facilities

Additionally, DHS clarified current eligibility to include all clergy (as part of health care personnel who provide spiritual care to the sick), restaurant workers (as part of the food supply

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eligibility group) and further expanded public safety to include judges, prosecutors, and other essential criminal court personnel, in addition to public defenders.

Depending on vaccine supply, DHS still anticipates that Wisconsin will be able to expand eligibility May 1 to include all individuals age 16 and older. DHS will continue to monitor vaccination coverage statewide and partner with vaccine providers in order to provide an updated vaccination timeline for the general public.

Individuals with the outlined medical conditions can access vaccine through a variety of options, including community-based clinics, health care providers, Local and Tribal Health Departments, and pharmacies. Wisconsinites with a primary care provider may hear directly from their provider. Visit the [Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccine options page](#) or call the toll free vaccine hotline at 1-844-684-1064 to learn more.

In the meantime, it is important to double-down on ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 due to emerging strains of the virus. Masking up, staying physically distant, washing hands, and getting tested continue to be crucial tools for protecting ourselves and our communities against COVID-19. Individuals who are fully vaccinated can review [recently released post-vaccination guidance](#) on the DHS website. For information, resources, and data related to Wisconsin's COVID-19 vaccination program, visit the [COVID-19 vaccine webpage](#).