

FACT SHEET

Vaccines for People with High-Risk Medical Conditions or Disabilities

March 11, 2021

On March 15, people with certain significant, high-risk medical conditions or disabilities will become eligible for vaccines statewide, to help save the lives of people who are at high-risk of death and severe complications from COVID-19. **The national supply of the vaccine remains limited, so appointments for the estimated 4.4 million Californians with these conditions or disabilities will not immediately be available to all who are eligible.** As supply increases throughout the spring, more appointments for vaccines will become available.

What high-risk conditions or disabilities make a person under 65 eligible for a vaccine after March 15?

People ages 16-64 can be eligible if they are [deemed to be at the very highest risk](#) to get very sick from COVID-19

EITHER because they have one or more of the following severe health conditions:

- **Cancer**, current with weakened immune system
- **Chronic kidney disease**, stage 4 or above
- **Chronic pulmonary disease**, oxygen dependent
- **Down syndrome**
- **Solid organ transplant**, leading to a weakened immune system
- **Pregnancy**
- **Sickle cell disease**
- **Heart conditions**, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies (but not hypertension)
- **Severe obesity** (Body Mass Index ≥ 40 kg/m²)
- **Type 2 diabetes mellitus** with hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.5%

OR if, as a result of a developmental or other significant, high-risk disability, one or more of the following criteria applies:

- A COVID-19 infection is likely to result in severe life-threatening illness or death; OR
- Acquiring COVID-19 will limit the individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival; OR
- Providing adequate and timely COVID care will be particularly challenging as a result of the individual's disability.

These three criteria include people with a range of physical and behavioral disabilities. Examples include: all enrolled consumers of Regional Centers, In Home Supportive Services, Independent Living Centers, Community Based Adult Services/Adult Day Health Centers, Medi-Cal HIV/AIDS Waiver, Medi-Cal Home and Community-Based Alternatives Waiver, Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver, Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, California Children's Services Program (if the child is 16-21 years old), and California Genetically Handicapped Persons Program.

See CDPH's [Provider Bulletin](#) from February 12 for details on the eligibility policy.

How do people with these high-risk conditions or disabilities get a vaccine?

There are five primary ways you may be able to find an appointment after March 15. Vaccine supply remains limited nationwide.

1. *Your Health Care Provider:* We strongly recommend individuals with these conditions seek vaccination with a primary health care provider or system, or in an alternate clinical setting. Check first with your usual health care provider to see if they have vaccines and available appointments. Health care providers who have vaccines may also begin reaching out to you, as a patient with a significant, high-risk medical condition or disability known to the provider, to schedule your vaccine appointment.
2. *Pharmacies:* You can check your local pharmacies to see if they have vaccines and available appointments. For the month of March, federal direction is that all school and child care staff are prioritized for pharmacy vaccines, so supply for other populations remains limited.
3. *Your Local Health Department:* Your local health department's website will continue to have information about how to find available vaccine appointments, even as national supply remains limited.
4. *Community Pop-Up Clinics:* Community pop-up clinics for people with high-risk medical conditions and disabilities will roll out in mid-March and will be targeted for equity to those living in communities with the lowest Healthy Place Index scores. Community partners will outreach to people eligible for the pop up clinics.
5. *MyTurn:* Throughout the spring, as vaccine supply increases and the statewide vaccinator network grows, you will be able to schedule an appointment through California's MyTurn, in two ways:
 - **On-line** at www.myturn.ca.gov. The MyTurn website is accessible to people with disabilities and in eight languages: English, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Japanese.
 - **Calling the COVID-19 Hotline** at 1-833-422-4255 or 1-833-4CA-4ALL (M-F 8AM-8PM, Sa-Su 8AM-5PM). The Hotline is accessible to people with disabilities and offers services in English and Spanish, with connections to interpretive services in more than 250 languages.

You will be asked to state that you have a high-risk medical condition or disability, either to book an available appointment or to register for notice of future appointments made available as supply increases. You will be able to request an accommodation at your vaccine site through MyTurn.

Will I need to verify I have a high-risk medical condition or disability when I go to my appointment?

To protect confidentiality, verification documentation of the diagnosis or type of disability is not required but instead anyone meeting the eligibility requirements will be asked to sign a self-attestation that they meet the criteria for high-risk medical conditions or disabilities.

Will vaccine sites be accessible?

All vaccine clinics in California are required to ensure sites and services are accessible in accordance with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.

How do I get a vaccine at home, if I am unable to travel to a vaccine site?

For current options, check with your health care provider, local health department, or local pharmacy.

How do I get transportation to a vaccine site?

For current options, check with your health care provider, local health department, or local pharmacy.

If you receive Medi-Cal through a managed care plan, contact your plan's member service department to request assistance for transportation to received covered benefits. If you receive Medi-Cal through Fee-for-Service (FFS), you can access a [list](#) of Non-Medical Transportation (NMT) providers in your county and you can contact them directly to arrange transportation to your appointments. If there is not a provider in your area, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) can assist if you email them DHCSNMT@dhcs.ca.gov. Please do NOT include personal information in your first email. DHCS staff will reply with a secure email asking for your information about the appointment. If you have a need for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, please inform your medical provider who can prescribe this service and put you in touch with a transportation provider to coordinate your ride to and from your appointment(s).