

# COVID-19 UPDATE

March 29, 2022

As part of our ongoing effort to comply with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) vaccine rule for healthcare workers, there will be several upcoming changes to our COVID-19 policies and precautions. Please carefully review the following updates about vaccinations, boosters, and COVID testing.

## Vaccination Requirement Update

As part of the CMS vaccine rule, all employees without approved COVID vaccine deferrals must be up to date with their vaccination by May 1.

The definition for up to date has changed to include boosters and is as follows:

- **Pfizer:** You are considered up to date if it has been less than five months since completing your primary vaccine series, or if it has been at least five months since you completed your primary vaccine series and you have received a booster vaccine dose. Teens 12-17 years old should only get a Pfizer vaccine booster dose. Everyone age 18 and older should get a booster dose of either Pfizer or Moderna.
- **Moderna:** You are considered up to date if it has been less than five months since completing your primary vaccine series, or if it has been at least five months since you completed your primary vaccine series and you have received a booster vaccine dose. Everyone 18 and older should get a booster dose of either Pfizer or Moderna.
- **Johnson & Johnson:** You are considered up to date if it has been less than two months since you received the initial Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or if it has been at least two months since you received the initial Johnson & Johnson vaccine and you have received a booster vaccine dose. Everyone 18 and older should get a booster dose of either Pfizer or Moderna.

For employees who need a booster dose, vaccine clinics will be offered in Classroom 5A as follows:

- Thursday, April 7, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Pfizer and Moderna
- Tuesday, April 12, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Pfizer
- Thursday, April 14, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Moderna
- Tuesday, April 19, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Pfizer
- Thursday, April 21, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Moderna
- Thursday, April 28, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Pfizer and Moderna

The above clinics are for boosters only. Appointments are required; no walk-ins will be accepted. Schedule online at [Benefis.org/vaccine](https://benefis.org/vaccine).

If you wish to receive a booster vaccine from a local community pharmacy, please scan a copy of the long-form document verifying your receipt of the vaccine from the pharmacy to [Employee\\_Health@benefis.org](mailto:Employee_Health@benefis.org).

Benefis will begin to track employees' up-to-date status on an ongoing basis, so if you are currently within five months of your initial Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series, or within two months of your initial Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you will be required to receive a booster dose once you fall outside of that window. If you have COVID at the point that you become eligible for a booster, you can wait until you are out of quarantine to receive your booster. If you receive a COVID antibody infusion within 90 days of becoming eligible for a booster, you can wait until 90 days following your infusion treatment to receive your booster.

### **COVID Testing Requirement**

As part of the CMS vaccine rule, starting April 11, employees who received medical or religious vaccine deferrals will be tested weekly for the virus. If you fall into this category, you and your manager will be contacted by Employee Health on April 7 to schedule your initial testing appointment. After that, your manager will schedule you for a recurring testing appointment on a particular day/time of the week. You must be tested at your scheduled time each week. If you need to adjust your scheduled appointment time on a particular week, your manager will need to reschedule you.

Initially, testing will occur on Floor 2 of Medical Office Building 4. Please note that within two-three weeks of the process beginning, testing is expected to be relocated to Floor 2 of Medical Office Building 11. The change will be indicated by signs at the testing locations.

Employees who received vaccine deferrals will also be offered the opportunity to be fit tested for N95 masks when they complete their first round of testing.

Please note that the above testing protocol does not apply to employees who work in Senior Services. Testing frequency and location will remain separate for Senior Services employees at this time.

### **Gatherings and Cafe Seating**

Beginning on April 1, gathering restrictions will be lifted and Cafe seating will return to normal. Please note that at this time, masking requirements remain in place outside of meal gatherings.

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