



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

Tel: (617) 983-6550
Fax: (617) 983-6925
www.mass.gov/dph

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

To: Health Care Organization Chief Executive Officers
From: Kevin Cranston, MDiv, Director, BIDLS
Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MPH, MBA, BHCSQ
Date: December 16, 2020
RE: Considerations for Health Care Personnel After COVID-19 Vaccination

Overview:

This memorandum applies to all health care organizations and providers. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) strongly encourages health care personnel and staff receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are eligible to do so. Early data suggest vaccines against COVID-19 are highly effective and safe. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to health care organizations and providers regarding health care personnel working in the three days following COVID-19 vaccination as personnel may experience side effects. This memorandum may be updated as more information is learned about the COVID-19 virus and vaccines against COVID-19.

Background:

In accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DPH guidance, any health care personnel who experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should remain out of work and seek testing.

Because a small percentage of individuals may experience side effects after being vaccinated against COVID-19 and many health care personnel will be vaccinated in a short period of time, DPH is providing guidance about how health care personnel may continue to work in the safest manner possible while mildly symptomatic in the three days following COVID-19 vaccine administration. The chart below describes these situations.

Post Vaccination	Recommendation for SARS-CoV-2 NAAT (i.e. PCR) Testing	Work restrictions
Local site reaction only	No	No restrictions
Mild allergic symptoms such as rash (not hives) or itching	No	No restrictions
Hives or more severe allergic reaction	No	No restrictions
< 3 days post-vaccination with one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mild symptoms < 101F • mild headache • mild fatigue characterized by sense of tiredness • mild myalgias (muscle aches) • mild arthralgias (joint pains) 	Yes	Able to work wearing appropriate PPE while PCR test is pending.
< 3 days post-vaccination, with any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever \geq 101F <i>or</i> • severe headache <i>or</i> • severe fatigue characterized by sense of exhaustion leading to curtailment of daily activities <i>or</i> • severe myalgias (muscle aches) <i>or</i> • severe arthralgias (joint pains) <i>or</i> • any other symptoms consistent with COVID-19 	Yes	Restricted from working onsite pending COVID-19 test results and suggest follow up with health care provider.
\geq 3 days post-vaccination, any symptoms consistent with COVID-19	Yes	Restricted from onsite work pending COVID-19 test results and 24 hours post-symptom resolution.

Health care personnel who develop any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 after vaccination should receive a test for SARS-CoV-2 as soon as possible.

Health care personnel are required to report certain adverse events following vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>. Please work with your employee health department or designee to share any adverse events.

Healthcare Personnel Definition:

For purposes of working onsite following vaccine administration and, in accordance with CMS and CDC guidance, health care personnel include: employees, consultants, contractors, caregivers who provide care and services to patients on behalf of the facility, and students in the clinical training programs or from affiliated academic institutions reporting to the facility.

Health care organizations and providers in Massachusetts are encouraged to monitor the following CMS and CDC websites for up-to-date information and resources:

- CMS website: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

Additionally, please review the following DPH resources for up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus> and <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts>