**NC DEPARTMENT OF**
**HEALTH AND**
**HUMAN SERVICES**

# Interim Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Vaccinated Against COVID-19
## (February 25, 2021)

Tested, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will help us get back in control of our lives and back to the people and places we love.

## When are you considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines provide their full protection from COVID-19 two weeks after you receive the second dose.** These vaccines require two shots a set number of days apart. You need two doses to build up strong immunity against COVID-19. The goal of the first vaccine dose is to "prime" the immune response, which means that it gets your body ready to have the best protection against COVID-19. The second dose "boosts" the immune response to be fully protected. The second dose of the Pfizer vaccine should be given around 3 weeks after the first dose. The second dose of the Moderna vaccine should be given around 4 weeks after the first dose.

## What should you do after you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **Continue practicing the 3 Ws - wearing a mask, waiting 6 feet apart, washing your hands - as well as limiting gatherings until most people are vaccinated**
  - Getting the COVID-19 vaccine and following the 3 Ws is everyone's best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.
  - The vaccines were found to help prevent COVID-19 and are very effective in preventing hospitalization and death, though scientists are still studying how often vaccinated individuals can become infected with the COVID-19 virus or pass the virus to others.
  - Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, this guidance will be updated using the latest science and recommendations from the CDC to protect communities.

- **Determine if you need to quarantine if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19**
  - If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine if you meet all of the following criteria:
    - Are fully vaccinated (i.e., at least 2 weeks after getting the second dose in a 2-dose series)
    - Are within 3 months or less after getting the second dose of the vaccine
    - Have had no symptoms from when you were exposed to someone with COVID-19
  - More information can be found from the CDC. Scientists are still learning how long people are protected after vaccination. The CDC guidance says that people do not need to quarantine if

they are exposed within 3 months or less after vaccination, but this timeframe is likely to get longer as we learn more.

- **Determine if you need to isolate if you have symptoms after your vaccination**
  - Temporary reactions can happen after getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and are more common after the second dose with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. They may include symptoms like a sore arm, headache or feeling tired and achy for a day or two and in some cases, fever or chills.  These temporary reactions are normal. They are good signs that your body is building protection.  Contact your doctor if the temporary reactions get worse after 24 hours or if they are worrying you and do not go away after a few days.
  - If you have symptoms that are common after vaccination – e.g., sore arm, headache or feeling tired and achy, chills – within 3 days after vaccination and have not been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 2 weeks, you can continue with your usual activities, including going to work or school, if you feel well enough.  If your symptoms are not improving or continue for more than 2 days you should contact your doctor.
  - If you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 and not common after vaccination – cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell – you should *not* go to work or school, isolate, and consider getting tested for COVID-19.
  - If you have a fever of at least 100.4 °F, you should *not* go to work or school.  If your fever lasts more than two days, contact your doctor and consider getting tested for COVID-19.

- **Share your positive vaccine experience with others!**
  - This [tip sheet ](#) can help you create and share your own video to promote vaccination.

- **Know how you can show proof of your vaccination against COVID-19**
  - You should receive a vaccination card that tells you which COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. People with access to email will also receive an email with proof of vaccination.  You can access your vaccine record anytime online in the [Portal](#).

- **Let your health care provider or public health officials know if you have questions or concerns about the vaccine**
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  - Though unlikely, if you have any adverse reactions caused by a COVID-19 Vaccine, report them to [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)](#).  Reports to VAERS help the CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. There is also a smartphone-based health checker called [V-SAFE](#) that uses text messaging and web surveys to do health check-ins after people receive a COVID-19 vaccination. You can report any problems you may have with a vaccine through V-SAFE.