

# ACTION BRIEF

## SPECIAL FEATURE FOR EMPLOYEES

# WORKING WELL DURING THE POST-CRISIS COVID-19 ERA

### The pandemic is not over.

The COVID-19 pandemic comes in waves of viral variants. In the fall and winter of 2022–23, the United States could see another significant wave of 100 million coronavirus infections, driven by new omicron subvariants.

### We have tools and oral treatment options to prevent work disruption, severe illness, and death.

We now have ways to cope with the ongoing pandemic. Wear a mask in public and maintain social distance when possible, wash hands or use hand sanitizer often, get vaccinated and boosted, test frequently, and get care quickly if you test positive.

### Testing is readily available.

Find a testing site near you at [HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov) or get free at-home test kits at

[covid.gov/tests](https://www.covid.gov/tests). Through the US government's Test-to-Treat program, people can get tested for COVID-19 and, if positive and at risk for serious illness, get treatment in one location. Visit [aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat](https://www.aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat) to find a center near you.

- ▶ **If you test positive** at home: Those with mild to moderate illness and risk factors—*which includes most US adults*—should have a video or in-person doctor visit right away. Oral prescription drugs must be started within five days of symptom onset to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death.
- ▶ **If you test negative**, return to normal activities. If you are not vaccinated or your vaccine is not up to date, get your free vaccination or booster as soon as possible. Those who are not up to date on the COVID-19 vaccine and were exposed to someone with the disease are advised to quarantine for five days.

### Vaccines work.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccines help protect those ages 6 months and older from getting infected and severely ill. They also greatly reduce the chance of hospitalization and death. Chances of hospitalization are 50 times greater for those who are not vaccinated.

### COVID Vaccines for Children Under 5: What Parents Need to Know

Children as young as 6 months can receive the safe, effective, no-cost Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna mRNA vaccines.

Since the pandemic began, there have been over 2 million cases, 20,000 hospitalizations, and 200 deaths due to COVID-19 in children under age 5. To keep your children safe, the CDC recommends the COVID-19 vaccine for children 6 months and older.

**Learn more:** [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#)

### REASONS TO GET TESTED

- ▶ If you have COVID-19 symptoms
- ▶ Five days after known or suspected close contact with someone who has COVID-19
- ▶ For screening (schools, workplaces, congregate settings, etc.)
- ▶ Before and after travel
- ▶ If you will be spending time with people at high-risk for serious COVID-19 illness (older adults, people with chronic conditions, pregnant people, people with immune system problems)

### TWO TYPES OF TESTS

#### Molecular tests, such as PCR (polymerase chain reaction)

- ▶ Fast, and the most accurate test available
- ▶ Find evidence of disease in the earliest stages of infection
- ▶ PCR tests for COVID-19 work are given through a blood test or nasal swab

#### Antigen tests, often call rapid tests

- ▶ FDA authorized for self-testing at home
- ▶ You collect your own sample with a nasal swab, perform the test, and read the result yourself
- ▶ Check for an expiration date on the package



View and share with employees the National Alliance “COVID-19 Lessons Learned” video.

## Know your employer's COVID-19 policies.

Become familiar with workplace COVID-19 policies. They will address things like:

### Health status

- ▶ Employers have a right to know whether employees have been vaccinated, to take employee temperatures, and to routinely screen employees with a rapid test.
- ▶ Understand the time-off policy for employees who must quarantine or take time away for caregiving, testing and vaccination.
- ▶ Use the employee assistance program and other resources for guidance about COVID-19 issues.
- ▶ Patients with long COVID may be protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### Vaccinations

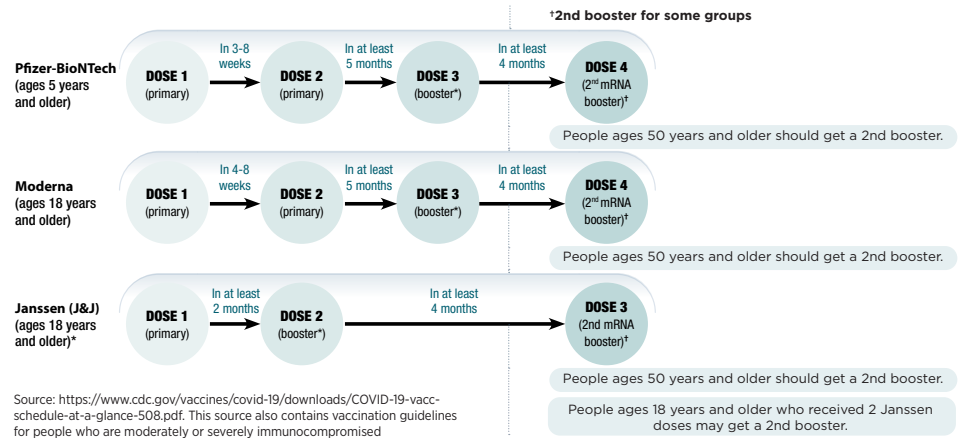
- ▶ Employers can require COVID-19 vaccinations as a condition of work. However, employers must show reasonable accommodations for employees with special needs (e.g., religion, health).
- ▶ Employers may offer vaccination incentives and/or paid time off for vaccinations.

### Work conditions

- ▶ Are masks supplied at work?
- ▶ Is work-area ventilation adequate?
- ▶ Does your workspace allow for social distancing?
- ▶ What is the policy if you feel unsafe working near employees who are unvaccinated and/or not wearing masks?
- ▶ What are the policies for remote or hybrid work?
- ▶ Are there employee resource groups and/or health safety advocates with whom you can discuss concerns?

## COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for Most People

### Number and intervals of COVID-19 vaccine doses



- ▶ Is CDC quarantine and isolation guidance being followed for workers who are exposed to or test positive for COVID-19?
- ▶ Are special benefits available such as flexible work schedules, paid sick leave for family care, elder care networks, or childcare subsidies to support employees with parental or other caregiving needs?

## Avoiding and preparing for infection.

- ▶ Get yourself and your children vaccinated and boosted
- ▶ Wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer
- ▶ Understand COVID-19 work policies
- ▶ Wear a mask in public and socially distance whenever possible
- ▶ Have home tests available and know where to get tested and treated
- ▶ Test frequently if you feel sick or were near someone with symptoms
- ▶ Isolate for at least five days if you test positive, even if symptoms are mild
- ▶ **Have a primary care doctor who can ensure all your prevention and treatment needs are met**

## COVID-19 Vaccine: The Facts

**Vaccines cannot cause COVID-19.** Vaccines to prevent COVID-19 do not contain any live virus. They may cause mild symptoms for a day or two—proof that your body is producing an immune response.

**At least 50% of COVID-19 survivors face ongoing symptoms of varying severity.** Even if symptoms are very mild, long COVID can disrupt lives including long-term health and wellbeing.

**The vaccine is safe.** COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips or metal, do not affect your DNA, and do not affect fertility.

**Vaccines are safe for people with common allergies.** Serious reactions to the vaccines are extremely rare.

**Vaccines build stronger immunity than contracting COVID-19.** Trust the safe and effective vaccines to protect you from serious illness.

**Vaccines are more effective than herd immunity.** Herd immunity, when more than 70% of the populations has had COVID-19, will result in more deaths than immunity from the vaccines.

**Vaccines give you additional protection even if you've already had COVID-19.** You can get COVID-19 multiple times.

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](#), [CDC](#), [WebMD](#).



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