

Know Your Rights

People with Disabilities and the COVID-19 Vaccine

Published: January 26, 2021

Vaccines that have been [tested and proven effective](#) at protecting people from COVID-19 are available in Oregon for some groups of people who are at high-risk from the virus. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 vaccination works by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19, and this protects you from getting sick with COVID-19. This guide answers some key questions about your rights as a person with a disability.

I have a disability. Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

In Oregon, you are eligible to get the COVID vaccine [under Phase 1A of Oregon's Vaccine Plan](#) if you are 16 years old or older and one of the following is true for you:

- » You live in a residential facility for people with disabilities, like a nursing home, group home, or foster care home.
- » You live at home and need any kind of in-home support related to your disability.
- » You are a family member or helper who provides services or supports for someone with a disability, even if you are not paid.
- » You are a parent of a medically-fragile child.

People [eligible under Phase 1A](#) are eligible now.

How do I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The Oregon Health Authority has not set-up a phone number to easily get this information. Finding information about where to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine is difficult. To receive the vaccine Disability Rights Oregon recommends:

- » [If you receive in-home services](#): Contact your caseworker or personal agent for help.
- » [If you live in a residential facility](#): Contact the manager of the facility for help.



- » If you live independently and do not have a caseworker or personal agent: Contact your local public health authority, dial 211 on your phone, or email the Oregon Health Authority at COVID19.vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us.

Do I need to have any documentation of my disability to get the vaccine?

No. Oregon does not require any proof of eligibility to get the vaccine.

What if my provider says they aren't sure if I am eligible?

Please show your provider this FAQ document and the following state documents:

- » [Oregon Health Authority's Phase 1a Vaccine Sequencing Plan](#)
- » [Oregon Health Authority's Presentation on People with I/DD and their Families](#)

If the provider continues to refuse to vaccinate you, contact:

1. Your [local public health authority](#) for assignment to a new provider
2. Contact Disability Rights Oregon. Contact us at: 503-243-2081 or 1-800-452-1694 or write us at Disability Rights Oregon, 511 SW 10th Avenue, Suite 200, Portland, Oregon 97205
3. Email the Oregon Health Authority at: COVID19.vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us

Should I get the vaccine?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has [found the COVID-19 vaccine to be safe and effective](#). You should discuss any individual concerns you have with your medical provider.

Can children get the vaccine?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved the vaccine for administration for children under 16. Children under the age of 16 will not receive the vaccine at this time. Only the vaccine manufactured by Pfizer is approved for children who are 16 or 17 years old.

Many adults who live or work with children with disabilities can get the vaccine, which [experts say](#) will help to reduce the likelihood of COVID spread.



Do I have to be eligible for Medicaid services through the state to get the vaccine?

No. Anyone 16 or older who gets any kind of support, paid or unpaid, at home because of their disability qualifies as part of [Phase 1A in Oregon's Vaccine Plan](#). People with disabilities who get in-home support with meals, hygiene tasks, behavioral needs, community engagement, medication management, or other basic needs are eligible, even if that support comes through private funding or unpaid supports.

Will I be charged money for the vaccine or sent a bill?

No. The Federal Government has paid for the vaccine for all people in the United States. However, vaccination providers can charge your insurance an administration fee for giving someone the shot. If you have insurance, that information may be requested when you receive the vaccine. No one can be denied a vaccine if they are unable to pay the vaccine administration fee.

Do I have to get the vaccine?

You can freely choose whether or not to get the vaccine. The law does not require you to get the vaccine. Some employers or schools may make vaccines a requirement for employment or attendance, however.

What should I do if I am eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine at this time, but am denied it?

If you are a person with a disability who is eligible to receive the vaccine, but a provider refuses to vaccinate you or to provide you with a reasonable accommodation, contact:

1. Your [local public health authority](#) for assignment to a new provider.
2. Email the Oregon Health Authority at: COVID19.vaccine@dhsosha.state.or.us.
3. Contact Disability Rights Oregon.

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