

COVID-19 fully vaccinated workforce plan

Key messages and FAQs

Summary

By Oct. 1, 2021, all Baylor Scott & White employees, providers on the medical staff (both employed and affiliated), volunteers, students, vendors and contract staff must receive both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, unless granted an exemption.

Key messages

- With rapidly rising COVID-19 case counts due to the highly contagious Delta variant and the start of the flu season fast approaching, we believe now is the right time to take the next step in achieving a fully vaccinated workforce.
- We are proud that the majority of our team members are vaccinated today. And by Oct. 1, 2021, all remaining employees, providers on our medical staff (both employed and affiliated), volunteers, vendors, students and contract staff must receive both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, unless granted an exemption. Read the full policy [here](#).
- New hires will also be required to present proof of immunization in alignment with the Oct. 1 compliance date or obtain an approved exemption. After Oct. 1, new hires must be fully vaccinated (meaning they cannot start until they are 14 days post receiving their second shot of Moderna or Pfizer or the single-shot J&J vaccine) or obtain an approved exemption prior to their employee health appointment.
- The COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and are safe and highly effective in preventing serious illness and hospitalization. More than one billion people are now fully immunized globally (with more than 3.8 billion total doses administered), and confidence in the science and research is strong—this is our greatest defense against the pandemic.
- Like our nicotine-free and flu vaccine programs, we believe taking this step will reduce risk for our workforce and those we serve. We hope it will also encourage fellow Texans to get vaccinated and put an end to this pandemic.
- At Baylor Scott & White, our Mission calls on us to promote the well-being of all individuals, families and communities. As an organization committed to making those we serve healthier, nothing is more important to us than protecting our patients and keeping each other safe.

How to become compliant by Oct. 1 if you are not fully vaccinated:

- Familiarize yourself with [the policy](#) and the deadlines. If you are taking a two-shot series, you will need to receive your first shot no later than either Sept. 3 (Moderna) or Sept. 10 (Pfizer).

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- You can schedule a vaccination appointment at one of our Baylor Scott & White pharmacies, clinics or urgent care centers through the MyBSWHealth app or on MyBSWHealth.com; or walk into one of our [sites](#). You can also get the vaccine at a non-Baylor Scott & White facility.
- Please send a picture of your CDC-issued vaccine card to EHCompliance@BSWHealth.org after each dose. Your name, date of birth and lot number should be on the card.
- Or submit a medical or religious exemption for review using [this form](#) by **Aug. 12** to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org.
- For questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, you may reach out to the Employee Health nurse navigator team at 817.922.2429 or by emailing VaccinationNavigator@BSWHealth.org. They can provide resources to address your questions or concerns.
- More information is available on our [vaccine page](#) and our [leader resources page](#).

Why now

- Over the past few weeks, our COVID-19 case counts have doubled due to the Delta variant. In fact, the rising number of hospitalizations have already required us to once again limit visitors across our facilities.
- This particular variant is the most contagious and dangerous strain we have seen to date, accounting for more than 80% of new cases in the U.S and about 60% in Texas—and rising.
- The overwhelming majority of these cases are among the unvaccinated, and they are being hospitalized with severe illness at increasing rates.
- This, coupled with the state's vaccination rates flattening and capacity restrictions widely lifted, has compelled us to act now.
- Our culture of safety runs deep and so does our commitment as a large employer and trusted healthcare provider to take every measure to protect our patients, communities and each other.

Team member FAQs

1. Why are you requiring the vaccine before full FDA approval is granted?

The Emergency Use Authorization status of the vaccines does not prohibit employers like BSWH from requiring a fully vaccinated workforce.

With rapidly rising COVID-19 case counts due to the highly contagious Delta variant, and the start of the flu season fast approaching, we believe now is the right time to take the next step in

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achieving a fully vaccinated workforce.

The Delta variant is the most contagious and dangerous strain we have seen to date, leading to exponentially increasing rates of severe illness and hospitalization. The overwhelming majority of these cases are among the unvaccinated. This, coupled with the state's vaccination rates flattening and capacity restrictions widely lifted, has compelled us to act now.

Our culture of safety runs deep and so does our commitment as a large employer and trusted healthcare provider to take every measure to protect our patients, communities and each other.

2. **By when do I need to be vaccinated?**

By Oct. 1, 2021, all employees, providers on our medical staff (both employed and affiliated), volunteers, vendors, students and contract staff must receive both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, unless granted an exemption. You can read the full policy [here](#).

If you are taking a two-shot series, you will need to receive your first shot no later than either Sept. 3 (Moderna) or Sept. 10 (Pfizer). The last day to receive the single-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is Oct. 1.

3. **Where can I get vaccinated?**

You can schedule a vaccination appointment at one of our Baylor Scott & White pharmacies, clinics or urgent care centers through the MyBSWHealth app or on MyBSWHealth.com; or walk into one of our [sites](#). You can also get the vaccine at a non-Baylor Scott & White facility.

Please send a picture of your CDC-issued vaccine card to EHCompliance@BSWHealth.org after each dose. Be sure that your name, date of birth and lot number are on the card. Once submitted and recorded, you will receive a confirmation email from Employee Health.

4. **What vaccines is Baylor Scott & White administering?**

Our clinics, pharmacies and urgent care centers are administering the Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, which have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use authorization (EUA) and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). You can find more information about which sites are administering which vaccine on our [BSWconnect page](#) and on the MyBSWHealth app.

Please note that if you plan to get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, there is a limited supply at our locations, and the state of Texas will not be requesting additional allocation from the manufacturer, which means that we will not be able to obtain more of this vaccine when our existing supply is exhausted. If you would like to receive this vaccine, please do so as soon as possible, or you may need to seek additional locations offering it in your community.

5. **How does Governor Abbott's most recent Executive Order GA-38 impact BSWH's fully vaccinated workforce effort?**

Because Baylor Scott & White is a private entity, Executive Order GA-38 does not prohibit

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BSWH from requiring employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or have an approved exemption as a condition of employment. Further, the US Department of Justice/FDA and the Department of Labor have both issued opinions that requiring the COVID-19 vaccine is permissible.

We understand that all team members have choices, and we encourage you to talk to our Employee Health nurse navigator team about questions or concerns related to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. They can be reached at 817.922.2429 or by emailing VaccinationNavigator@BSWHealth.org.

In addition, medical and religious exemptions can be submitted for review using [this form](#) by **Aug. 12** to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org.

Our culture of safety runs deep and so does our commitment as a large employer and trusted healthcare provider to take every measure to protect our patients, communities and each other. The Delta variant is the most contagious and dangerous strain we have seen to date, leading to exponentially increasing rates of severe illness and hospitalization. The overwhelming majority of these cases are among the unvaccinated. This has compelled us to act now to achieve a fully vaccinated workforce.

6. I received my vaccine already. How can I confirm that Employee Health has my vaccination record?

Please work with your manager to check your compliance status in PeoplePlace Reporting and Analytics. If you received your vaccine, but our records indicate that you have not been vaccinated, please send a picture of your CDC-issued vaccine card to EHCompliance@BSWHealth.org. Be sure that your name, date of birth and lot number are on the card. Once submitted and recorded, you will receive a confirmation email from Employee Health.

7. I received my vaccine outside of Baylor Scott & White? What documentation do I need to show?

Please send a picture of your CDC-issued vaccine card to EHCompliance@BSWHealth.org. Be sure that your name, date of birth and lot number are on the card. Once submitted and recorded, you will receive a confirmation email from Employee Health.

8. Will I get a confirmation once my vaccination record has been received by Employee Health?

Yes. Once your CDC-issued vaccination card has been submitted to Employee Health and recorded, an automated email will be sent to you. Similar to our flu program, your manager will be able to track your compliance in PeoplePlace Reporting and Analytics.

9. I lost my vaccination card. Where can I get a new one?

You can request a copy of your immunization record from the [Texas Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) site](#).

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If you received your COVID-19 vaccine at a Baylor Scott & White facility, you can also access and print your immunization record, including the lot number, through MyBSWHealth.com using [these instructions](#).

10. How do I apply for an exemption?

You must submit a medical or religious exemption for review using [this form](#) by **Aug. 12** to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org. Our COVID-19 vaccine exemption committee, which is made up of clinicians and chaplains, will review your submission and notify you if your exemption is approved, denied or if more information is needed. Employees who receive a denied exemption will be notified of the appeal process. If the appeal is denied, you must receive both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine by Oct. 1 as a condition of your employment.

11. What is considered a valid exemption?

All exemptions are factually based and determined by the Baylor Scott & White COVID-19 vaccine exemption committee. Medical contraindications (including allergies to ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines or severe allergic reactions), certain conditions covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or sincerely held religious tenets or beliefs are considered acceptable reasons for being exempted from the requirement to have the COVID-19 vaccine; however, other reasons may exist based upon CDC guidance.

In addition, if you have a temporary medical condition (for example: received monoclonal antibody therapies to treat COVID-19 or currently have COVID-19), you may be temporarily exempted. However, you must be fully vaccinated or obtain an approved exemption as soon as practical after resolution of the temporary medical condition.

When submitting a religious exemption, please describe in detail any specific religious tenets or beliefs that prevent you from taking the vaccine.

12. What is the deadline to apply for an exemption?

You must submit a medical or religious exemption for review using [this form](#) by **Aug. 12** to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org.

13. Who sits on the COVID-19 vaccine exemption committee?

The committee includes clinicians, chaplains and representatives from HR. Clinicians include experts from maternal fetal medicine, infectious disease, family medicine and other specialties.

14. Will I be notified of the decision on my exemption request once it has been reviewed by the COVID-19 vaccine exemption committee?

Yes, both you and your manager will receive notice of the decision regarding your exemption request once it has been reviewed by the COVID-19 vaccine exemption committee.

15. I am a remote employee or working outside the state of Texas. Does this apply to me?

Yes. All employees working for Baylor Scott & White within the U.S. must receive both doses of

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the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, unless granted an exemption.

16. What happens if I choose not to get vaccinated or my exemption is denied?

If you are not vaccinated or you do not have a BSWH-approved exemption by Oct. 1, you will be considered noncompliant with the [policy](#), and will be subject to separation from employment, and/or other remedies as permitted by applicable governing documents.

17. I have already recovered from COVID-19. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. COVID-19 is very dangerous and highly contagious, especially with new and emerging variants. It is possible that you can become reinfected with COVID-19, even if you have already recovered from the virus.

The COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and are safe and highly effective in preventing serious illness and hospitalization. More than one billion people are now fully immunized globally (with more than 3.8 billion total doses administered), and confidence in the science and research is strong—this is our greatest defense against the pandemic.

18. I still have antibodies from natural infection of COVID-19. Does this count as an exemption?

No. We continue to follow CDC guidance which recommends vaccination for those who have had COVID-19.

Data suggests that natural infections are associated with an erratic immunological response in terms of production of antibodies, and it is unclear at what level the antibodies are protective and is unknown the impact on the function of the T cell lymphocytes, which are critical for developing viable immunological response. As such, previous infections cannot guarantee protection from reinfection, especially with emerging variants.

In addition, while some people may be monitoring their level of antibodies following a positive COVID-19 infection, the level of antibodies detected varies based on the laboratory being used. Thus, we can't accept the history of previous infection as an exemption.

19. I am pregnant, breastfeeding or looking to become pregnant. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Society for Maternal Fetal (SFMFM) and the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) encourages vaccination for women who are pregnant, breast feeding, attempting to get pregnant or undergoing treatment for infertility.

Based on recommendations and available evidence from leading women's health organizations, the vaccines are safe for these populations. As such, employees who are pregnant, breastfeeding or trying to get pregnant are not exempted from being fully vaccinated by Oct. 1. You must submit a medical or religious exemption for review using [this form](#) by Aug. 12 to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org.

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Below is additional information about the importance of vaccination against COVID-19 and the safety of the vaccines in those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or looking to become pregnant:

- COVID-19 patients who are pregnant are three times more likely to end up in the intensive care unit (ICU), be put on a ventilator and are at increased risk of death, stillbirth or preterm birth.
- A study published recently in [The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology](#) shows the vaccines are not only safe and effective for pregnant and breastfeeding women, they may also offer some protection for their babies. In fact, antibodies were also found in umbilical cord blood and breast milk.
- Protective antibodies have also been shown to cross the placenta and confer protection to the baby after delivery.
- In addition, according to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, there is no evidence that the vaccines can lead to loss of males or female fertility or fertility treatment outcomes.
- Existing data suggests COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy does not increase risk of miscarriage.
- According to the CDC, as of July 26, 2021, **139,562 pregnant women** have been vaccinated and 5,104 are participating in a registry with frequent follow up with no increase in adverse maternal events or pregnancy outcomes noted.
- You can learn more on our [Arm in Arm page on BSWconnect](#).

20. I have questions about the vaccine. Who can I reach out to?

For questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, you may reach out to the Employee Health nurse navigator team at 817.922.2429 or by emailing VaccinationNavigator@BSWHealth.org. They can provide resources to address your questions or concerns.

We also have additional information on our [Arm in Arm page on BSWconnect](#). The site shares important information about the vaccines, as well as powerful stories from your colleagues about why they got the shot. From concerns about fertility and pregnancy, to vaccine development and potential side effects, employees share their hesitations and how they overcame them.

21. I currently have COVID-19. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

If you are currently diagnosed with COVID-19, please coordinate with your provider on the timing of when you should receive the vaccine. In the meantime, if you are not able to receive the vaccine by the Oct. 1 compliance date, you will need to submit an exemption for review using [this form](#) to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org by **Aug.12**. Please note that you must be fully vaccinated or obtain an approved exemption as soon as practical after resolution of the temporary medical condition.

22. I have received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma within the last 90 days. Do I need to get vaccinated right now?

If you have received convalescent plasma or monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19, the

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CDC recommends that you wait 90 days to receive the vaccine. In the meantime, please submit an exemption for review using [this form](#) to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org. Please note that you must be fully vaccinated or obtain an approved exemption as soon as practical after resolution of the temporary medical condition.

23. I have had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine or a COVID-19 vaccine/I am allergic to one of the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines. What should I do?

Please submit a medical exemption for review using [this form](#) to VaccineExemption@BSWHealth.org by **Aug.12**. A medical contraindication to one type of COVID-19 vaccine (example, mRNA vaccines) may require you to receive another type of COVID-19 vaccine (example, viral vector vaccine).

24. When am I considered fully vaccinated?

According to the CDC, individuals are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 14 days after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine. This means that by Oct. 15, we will have a vaccinated workforce.

25. Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other immunizations?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines and other immunizations (including the influenza vaccine) may now be administered without regard to timing.

26. Do I still have to wear a mask after I am vaccinated?

Yes, regardless of vaccination status, masks are required. Please refer to our [reuse and extended use procedures for PPE policy](#) for additional masking guidance.

27. Who should I contact if I have a reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine?

Employees or those covered by Safe Choice should contact the Employee Health Command Center at 817-922-2429 and follow the Safe Choice reporting requirements by completing an employee incident report in Midas.

28. Are absences related to the COVID-19 vaccine and symptoms excused?

An absence will be considered excused if it is due to symptoms from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine or if the employee reports the absence to the command center.

An absence will be considered unexcused and an occurrence if they do not report it to the command center.

29. Is time spent getting the vaccination compensable?

Baylor Scott & White will pay a non-exempt employee's hourly rate for a reasonable amount of time that it takes to receive the vaccine. It is expected an employee will use a vaccination site close to their work location on a normally scheduled day. Alternatively, if a site near their work location is not available, the employee may use another location within a reasonable distance of their work or home. In this case, the employee should submit that time to their manager for entry into API.

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30. Will booster shots be required and what is the timeframe?

We continue to monitor the FDA, CDC and ACIP for guidance on booster immunizations. At this time, no boosters have not been approved. We will notify team members if/when a booster becomes available and/or is required.