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## DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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December 29, 2020

### DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZATIONAL CIRCULAR NO. 21-008

To: Line Department and Agency Heads

From: Director, Department of Administration

Subject: Personnel Alert and Information  
**RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Administration to Government of Guam Employees**

*Buenas yan Håfa Adai!* Beginning December 17, 2020, the administration of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine commenced for the island. The administration of the vaccine to government of Guam employees who meet the criteria established by the DPHSS in accordance with CDC guidelines is done so on a voluntary basis. This means that employees who are eligible to receive the vaccine at this time can only do so if they provide consent.

The administration of the COVID-19 vaccine is still in its infancy and there are many questions that surround the vaccine and how it effects each person. In an effort to address those questions and inquiries, please see the attached reference material with information. Since the process has just begun and is moving through its initial phases, information, data, and facts will continue to evolve throughout this phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please monitor the Department of Public Health and Social Services website at [www.dphss.guam.gov](http://www.dphss.guam.gov).

With the administration of vaccines to government of Guam employees; it is important to monitor those employees who received the vaccine to ensure that any adverse reactions to the vaccine are caught at the onset of any symptoms. All department and agency heads must keep a list within their respective departments and agencies of those employees who opted to receive the vaccine. If adverse reactions to the vaccine are noticed based on the onset of any symptoms provided in the attachments (or subsequent updated information as provided by the DPHSS and/or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]) the following applies:

1. Employees who are experiencing any of the symptoms prescribed in guidance from the DPHSS or CDC should be allowed to stay home for as many days as is needed for symptoms to subside (without the aid of fever reducing medicine). Employees must immediately notify their supervisor (whether at the worksite or prior to coming in) of their symptoms and/or illness. The requirement to obtain a doctor's certification for absences in excess of three (3) days may not be required for those employees who opted to take the COVID-19 vaccine. However, if there is any reason to believe that an employee may be abusing leave during the period where symptoms are apparent, supervisors may require a doctor's certification. All absences shall be charged to the employee's accrued sick leave first, then annual leave once sick leave is exhausted, or may use the Leave Sharing Program for those employees who do not have accrued leave or who do not accrue leave. Managers and supervisors must take into consideration the flexibility that may be necessary when reviewing leave requests specific to the COVID-19 vaccine.

2. Department / Agency heads who are actively tracking those employees who have received the COVID-19 vaccine should make arrangements and preparations within their agencies to provide coverage for employees who may have the necessity to go on leave as a result of receiving the vaccine. This would be the time to consider job sharing and cross-training of employees in your respective departments. Plans should be made for coverage of any critical services that departments provide for the duration of time that an employee may need to recover from any adverse effects.
3. If employees do exhibit symptoms of any adverse effects of the vaccine; but those symptoms are mild and the employee chooses to, or is able to work, supervisors are not required to send them home. Based on current information, the COVID-19 vaccine **will not** infect someone with the COVID-19 virus; however, close monitoring of any symptoms will be necessary in case the condition of employees and symptoms worsen over time. Each manager and / or supervisor will have to use their best judgment to determine whether or not an employee must be sent home to recover from symptoms.

It is important to remember that these are the beginning stages of the vaccine and recovery phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic and that information may change slightly or radically throughout this process. As information gets updated by the DPHSS, DOA will adjust, if necessary, any guidance that pertains directly to the employees within agencies covered by the DOA Personnel Rules and Regulations.

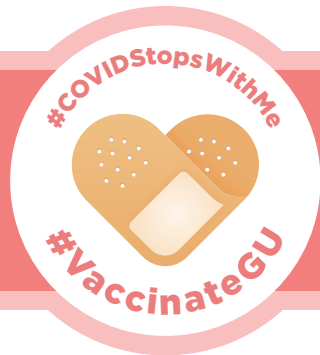
Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact our Classification and Pay Branch at 475-1249 / 475-1288. Should you require information specific to the vaccine or any health related questions, please visit the DPHSS website at [www.dphss.guam.gov](http://www.dphss.guam.gov).  
*Dangkolo na Agradesimiento!*

EDWARD M. BIRN

Attachments

*Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers*

*Answering Questions About the COVID-19 vaccine*



# ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

## 1. SHOULD I GET VACCINATED FOR COVID-19?

It is strongly recommended that you get vaccinated. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness. By getting vaccinated, you can also help protect people around you.

## 2. CAN THE VACCINE GIVE ME COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use or in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.

## 3. IF I ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED?

Yes. CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can catch it more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last.

## 4. CAN MY CHILD GET VACCINATED FOR COVID-19?

No. More studies need to be conducted before COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for children aged 16 and younger.

## 5. IS IT SAFE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE IF I HAVE AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.

## 6. IS IT BETTER TO GET NATURAL IMMUNITY TO COVID-19 RATHER THAN IMMUNITY FROM A VACCINE?

No. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection lasts. Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have debilitating symptoms that persist for months.

## 7. WHY DO I NEED TWO COVID-19 SHOTS?

Currently authorized vaccines, and most vaccines under development, require two doses of vaccine. The first shot helps the immune system recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response. You need both to get the best protection.

## 8. WILL THE SHOT HURT OR MAKE ME SICK?

There may be side effects, but they should go away within a few days. Possible side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This does not mean you have COVID-19. Side effects are signs that the vaccine is working to build immunity. If they don't go away in a week, or you have more serious symptoms, call your doctor.

## 9. ARE THERE LONG-TERM SIDE EFFECTS FROM COVID-19 VACCINE?

Because all COVID-19 vaccines are new, it will take more time and more people getting vaccinated to learn about very rare or possible long-term side effects. The good news is, at least 8 weeks' worth of safety data were gathered in the clinical trials for all the authorized vaccines, and it's unusual for vaccine side effects to appear more than 8 weeks after vaccination.

## 10. HOW DO I KNOW IF COVID-19 VACCINE IS SAFE?

All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA will keep monitoring the vaccines to look for safety issues after they are authorized and in use.

## 11. WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital. Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.



For more information, visit [dphss.guam.gov](https://dphss.guam.gov) or call 311

## **FACT SHEET FOR RECIPIENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

### **EMERGENCY USE AUTHORIZATION (EUA) OF THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE TO PREVENT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) IN INDIVIDUALS 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER**

You are being offered the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by SARS-CoV-2. This Fact Sheet contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, which you may receive because there is currently a pandemic of COVID-19.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is a vaccine and may prevent you from getting COVID-19. There is no U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

Read this Fact Sheet for information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Talk to the vaccination provider if you have questions. It is your choice to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is administered as a 2-dose series, 3 weeks apart, into the muscle.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine may not protect everyone.

This Fact Sheet may have been updated. For the most recent Fact Sheet, please see [www.cvdvaccine.com](http://www.cvdvaccine.com).

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GET THIS VACCINE?**

### **WHAT IS COVID-19?**

COVID-19 disease is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. This type of coronavirus has not been seen before. You can get COVID-19 through contact with another person who has the virus. It is predominantly a respiratory illness that can affect other organs. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms may include: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.

### **WHAT IS THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is an unapproved vaccine that may prevent COVID-19. There is no FDA-approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

The FDA has authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

For more information on EUA, see the “**What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?**” section at the end of this Fact Sheet.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU MENTION TO YOUR VACCINATION PROVIDER BEFORE YOU GET THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

**Tell the vaccination provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:**

- have any allergies
- have a fever
- have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner
- are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
- are breastfeeding
- have received another COVID-19 vaccine

### **WHO SHOULD GET THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

FDA has authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine in individuals 16 years of age and older.

### **WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

You should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine if you:

- had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of this vaccine
- had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient of this vaccine.

### **WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS IN THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine includes the following ingredients: mRNA, lipids ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol), potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate, and sucrose.

### **HOW IS THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE GIVEN?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine will be given to you as an injection into the muscle.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine vaccination series is 2 doses given 3 weeks apart.

If you receive one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, you should receive a second dose of this same vaccine 3 weeks later to complete the vaccination series.

### **HAS THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE BEEN USED BEFORE?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is an unapproved vaccine. In clinical trials, approximately 20,000 individuals 16 years of age and older have received at least 1 dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

In an ongoing clinical trial, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19 following 2 doses given 3 weeks apart. The duration of protection against COVID-19 is currently unknown.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

Side effects that have been reported with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine include:

- injection site pain
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- chills
- joint pain
- fever
- injection site swelling
- injection site redness
- nausea
- feeling unwell
- swollen lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy)

There is a remote chance that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of your face and throat
- A fast heartbeat
- A bad rash all over your body
- Dizziness and weakness

These may not be all the possible side effects of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Serious and unexpected side effects may occur. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is still being studied in clinical trials.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?**

If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital.

Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

Report vaccine side effects to **FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)**. The VAERS toll-free number is 1-800-822-7967 or report online to <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>. Please include “Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine EUA” in the first line of box #18 of the report form.

In addition, you can report side effects to Pfizer Inc. at the contact information provided below.

Website	Fax number	Telephone number
<a href="http://www.pfizersafetyreporting.com">www.pfizersafetyreporting.com</a>	1-866-635-8337	1-800-438-1985

#### **WHAT IF I DECIDE NOT TO GET THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

It is your choice to receive or not receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Should you decide not to receive it, it will not change your standard medical care.

#### **ARE OTHER CHOICES AVAILABLE FOR PREVENTING COVID-19 BESIDES PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?**

Currently, there is no approved alternative vaccine available for prevention of COVID-19. FDA may allow the emergency use of other vaccines to prevent COVID-19.

#### **CAN I RECEIVE THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE WITH OTHER VACCINES?**

There is no information on the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine with other vaccines.

#### **WHAT IF I AM PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING?**

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, discuss your options with your healthcare provider.

#### **WILL THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE GIVE ME COVID-19?**

No. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2 and cannot give you COVID-19.


#### **KEEP YOUR VACCINATION CARD**

When you get your first dose, you will get a vaccination card to show you when to return for your second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Remember to bring your card when you return.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions, visit the website or call the telephone number provided below.

To access the most recent Fact Sheets, please scan the QR code provided below.

Global website	Telephone number
<a href="http://www.cvdvaccine.com">www.cvdvaccine.com</a> 	1-877-829-2619 (1-877-VAX-CO19)

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- Ask the vaccination provider.
- Visit CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.
- Visit FDA at <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization>.
- Contact your local or state public health department.

## WHERE WILL MY VACCINATION INFORMATION BE RECORDED?

The vaccination provider may include your vaccination information in your state/local jurisdiction's Immunization Information System (IIS) or other designated system. This will ensure that you receive the same vaccine when you return for the second dose. For more information about IISs visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/about.html>.

## WHAT IS THE COUNTERMEASURES INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM?

The Countermeasures Injury Compensation Program (CICP) is a federal program that may help pay for costs of medical care and other specific expenses of certain people who have been seriously injured by certain medicines or vaccines, including this vaccine. Generally, a claim must be submitted to the CICP within one (1) year from the date of receiving the vaccine. To learn more about this program, visit [www.hrsa.gov/cicp/](http://www.hrsa.gov/cicp/) or call 1-855-266-2427.

## WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY USE AUTHORIZATION (EUA)?

The United States FDA has made the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine available under an emergency access mechanism called an EUA. The EUA is supported by a Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) declaration that circumstances exist to justify the emergency use of drugs and biological products during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has not undergone the same type of review as an FDA-approved or cleared product. FDA may issue an EUA when certain criteria are met, which includes that there are no adequate, approved, available alternatives. In addition, the FDA decision is based on the totality of scientific evidence available showing that the product may be effective to prevent COVID-19 during the COVID-19 pandemic and that the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh the known



and potential risks of the product. All of these criteria must be met to allow for the product to be used in the treatment of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EUA for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 EUA declaration justifying emergency use of these products, unless terminated or revoked (after which the products may no longer be used).



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**BIONTECH**

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Scan to capture that this Fact Sheet was provided to vaccine recipient for the electronic medical records/immunization information systems.

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