

# COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

## Guidance for Vaccine Providers to Minimize Vaccine Wastage

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) offers the following guidance to vaccine providers to minimize **COVID-19 vaccine wastage**. As vaccine supply, demand, and administration strategies continue to evolve, providers must utilize new approaches to make vaccine readily available to the people in their communities. Administration strategies such as walk-ins, vaccination of homebound individuals, or smaller on-site clinics may present an increased risk of vaccine wastage. Vaccine providers should make all reasonable efforts to minimize vaccine wastage.

### Estimating doses and planning vaccinations

In order to mitigate the risk of wasting COVID-19 vaccine, providers should confirm the number of vaccine recipients before each scheduled clinic whenever possible. In cases where walk-in vaccinations are accepted, appointments are canceled or the vaccine recipient misses an appointment, it's crucial that providers have a plan in place for what to do if extra doses remain that are set to expire and must be used quickly.

Ensure staff understand storage, temperature and handling requirements for each vaccine product, including how long vaccine can be held at room temperature. Consult manufacturer and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for each vaccine product:

- [Pfizer](#)
- [Moderna](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson \(Janssen\)](#)

ODH recommends that vaccine administration begin within 24 hours of receipt of a shipment, and that those doses be administered within seven days. However, some vaccine outreach efforts will take longer to plan and execute. ODH supports those plans and is offering providers more flexibility to execute those plans. Providers who would like to discuss their allocations and any challenges with throughput should contact ODH at 1-844-963-4829 or email [COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov).

### Who can receive unused doses

If vaccine remains unused, such as at the end of a vaccination clinic, the primary goal should be to provide that vaccine quickly to any eligible vaccine recipients.

Vaccinations are open to people 16 and older. Individuals ages 16 and 17 are eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine, which is the only COVID-19 vaccine currently authorized for use with people younger than 18.

Children ages 16 and 17 who are not emancipated must have parental or legal guardian consent for any vaccine. A parent or legal guardian generally should accompany the minor to receive the vaccine, unless the administration of the vaccine occurs in a physician's office, school-based or school-associated clinic setting or similar setting. Providers can download consent forms for use as needed: [English](#) | [Spanish](#).

## Required actions by providers

If more than 20 doses are at risk of wastage, please call the ODH Provider Call Center at 1-844-963-4829 immediately for guidance and to discuss options including, but not limited to, [transfer of vaccine to other enrolled providers](#). Movement of vaccine is not a recommended practice but is permitted between enrolled providers upon approval by ODH in special circumstances.

If leftover doses are administered, the provider giving those doses must do the following:

- The vaccine administration must be reported in [ImpactSIIS](#), including race and ethnicity data, within 24 hours.
- [Target population/occupation data](#) must be submitted within 24 hours.
- Please include these vaccinated individuals in your follow-up plans for administering second doses.

## Special considerations for vaccinations for homebound individuals

According to guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), [providers vaccinating individuals who are homebound](#) should carefully plan those appointments to understand how they can minimize vaccine wastage and ensure safe and effective vaccination. This includes:

- **Estimate the number of doses needed as accurately as possible.** Contact recipients or their caregivers in advance to determine those who wish to be vaccinated to best estimate how many doses will be needed. Plan to use all doses in a vial transported for home vaccination, if possible, to minimize wasting vaccine doses, and offer leftover doses to caregivers or other persons in the home to avoid vaccine wastage.
- **Map out travel plans** to ensure vaccine is utilized within the approved time frames for use of vaccine at different temperatures, including factoring in pre-vaccination preparation time, and post-vaccination observation time.
- **Ensure readiness to maintain, monitor, and report temperature of vaccine** from the time the vaccine is taken out of a clinic facility, during transportation, and up to the time that vaccine is administered.

## Proper Disposal of Expired or Unusable Vaccine

When vaccine product is determined to be unusable for reasons including temperature excursions, accidents, or expiration, vaccine providers should follow the steps below to properly discard expired or unusable vaccine. Determining when a vaccine or diluent expires is a critical step in proper storage and handling.

- Expired vaccines and diluents should be removed immediately from storage units to avoid inadvertently administering them.
- COVID-19 vaccine that is exposed to temperature excursions may be determined to be spoiled by vaccine manufacturers. If providers have COVID-19 vaccine that is determined to be spoiled, wasted, or unusable for another reason, the provider must remove the vaccine from the storage unit to avoid administration errors.
- Manufacturers may have specific guidance on how to handle expired or compromised vaccines. However, open or broken vials, and vaccine pre-drawn by providers cannot be returned and should be discarded.
- Providers should dispose of vaccine waste in accordance with local regulations and processes used to dispose of regulated infectious waste. For more information on disposing of infectious waste, visit the [Ohio EPA website](#).

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For additional information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#).

Please call the ODH Provider Call Center between 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, at 1-844-9ODHVAX (1-844-963-4829) or email [COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov). You also may visit the ODH [COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Information Training page](#) for additional information and resources.