

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement FAQ

1. **(UPDATED November 12, 2021) Why is Kettering Health requiring COVID-19 vaccination for all employees, providers, volunteers, and business partners?**

As a healthcare organization, the safety of our patients, staff, and providers is one of our highest priorities. More than 330 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have now been given in the United States, and the science is clear: the vaccines are highly effective at preventing infection, hospitalization, and death. This efficacy rivals that of the best vaccines ever developed. In addition, the side effects are generally mild and short-lived. Currently, we are seeing a surge of COVID-19 in our region, caused by the Delta variant.

The Ohio Hospital Association has recommended that all hospital employees be vaccinated. The same recommendation has been made by more than 50 professional societies, including the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. Many other healthcare networks have stepped up and made this same decision. This decision helps us protect one another's safety and well-being while carrying out our mission: to improve the quality of life of the people in the communities we serve.

Finally, on November 5, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an emergency regulation requiring covered providers, like Kettering Health, to implement a vaccine requirement for staff.

2. **Is it legal to make employees get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, it is. State and federal employment laws allow employers to require vaccines. The U.S. Department of Justice also recently published an opinion stating that federal law permits vaccine mandates. Kettering Health and other hospitals across the country already require vaccinations for other highly communicable diseases, like the flu, as a condition of employment.

3. **(UPDATED November 12, 2021) Why is Kettering Health requiring the vaccination before any of the vaccines have full U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval?**

On August 23, 2021, the FDA approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for individuals 16 years of age and older. The FDA subsequently approved the vaccine for children ages 5-11.

Vaccination against COVID-19 protects you and everyone around you: your team, your family, your friends, your patients, your community. The scientific evidence as well as real-world experiences show that the COVID-19 vaccines are both safe and effective against symptomatic infections, hospitalizations, and death. The COVID-19 vaccine saves lives and, as a healthcare organization, we must do all we can to protect our teams and our communities.

4. **(UPDATED November 12, 2021) I've already had COVID-19 and have antibodies. Can I agree to be tested for COVID-19 in lieu of getting the COVID-19 vaccine?**

No. The CMS rule is clear that testing in lieu of vaccination is not permitted.

5. If masks and social distancing work, why do I have to get vaccinated?

Safety precautions and vaccines all help protect you from COVID-19, but they work in different ways. The vaccine helps prepare your immune system to fight the COVID-19 virus if you're exposed to it. Masks and social distancing help limit your exposure and lower the chance of you spreading the virus. To end the pandemic, we need to use all the tools available.

6. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) I've heard some people still get COVID-19 after being vaccinated. Why should I get a vaccine that doesn't work?

All of the COVID-19 vaccines have proven to be very effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalizations, and death from COVID-19 (including the delta variant). To learn more about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, [click here](#) to watch a video with Jeffrey Weinstein, MD, infectious disease expert and network patient safety officer.

7. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) I work remotely. Am I subject to the COVID-19 vaccine requirement?

It depends. If you provide services 100% remotely and you live more than 100 miles from a Kettering Health facility, you are exempt from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement.

Please note: Employees that do not directly care for patients may still interact with employees that do. Also, as we did last year, we may need to ask an employee in any role to provide support at our healthcare facilities to ensure we are able to care for our patients. It's vital that we all do everything we can to protect each other as well as our communities and end the pandemic.

8. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) Will I lose my job if I don't get vaccinated?

Those who do not meet the following timeline for vaccination will be issued discipline as follows: Those who do not receive the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (or the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) by December 5 will be issued a final written warning, and those who have not received all required doses of the vaccine by January 4 will be terminated. Employees who are already on a final written warning as of December 5 and who fail to get the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (or the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) by that date will be terminated.

Note: Employees who are not compliant with the COVID-19 vaccine requirement as of December 5 will not be allowed to work until they get at least the first dose of the vaccine (and the second dose by January 4).

9. (UPDATED August 10, 2021) How do I submit proof of my vaccination status if Kettering Health's records show that I have not received the COVID-19 vaccine?

Employees, medical staff and volunteers who are contacted by their leader about their vaccination status because our records show they have not received the COVID-19 vaccine should email a copy of their vaccination card or other documentation from their healthcare provider to the Employee Health office at ehprograms@ketteringhealth.org.

10. What if I lost my CDC vaccination card or other proof I was vaccinated?

If you received your vaccine through a healthcare provider and were registered for its patient portal, your vaccine record may be available through your account. If you were vaccinated at a retailer such as Kroger Health Little Clinic or CVS, contact them to request a copy. You may also contact the Ohio Department of Health for a copy, as it maintains a vaccination information system.

11. (UPDATED August 10, 2021) Do I need to submit proof of vaccination if I receive or received my vaccine from a Kettering Health vaccine clinic?

Employees, medical staff and volunteers who are contacted by their leader about their vaccination status because our records show they have not received the COVID-19 vaccine should email a copy of their vaccination card or other documentation from their healthcare provider to the Employee Health office at ehprograms@ketteringhealth.org. Likewise, employees, medical staff and volunteers who are not vaccinated but get the COVID-19 vaccine in the future will need to email a copy of their vaccination card to the Employee Health office at ehprograms@ketteringhealth.org regardless where they get the COVID-19 vaccine.

12. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) Can I be exempt from having to get the vaccine?

Yes, Kettering Health will review exemption requests submitted by individuals who are precluded from getting the vaccine for medical reasons or sincerely held religious beliefs. Such requests will be granted where legally required and supporting documentation is required. Exemption request forms are available, and [can be accessed by clicking here](#). You must be connected to Kettering Health's network to access these forms. Exemption requests must be received by **November 24 at 11:59 p.m.** Submissions must be emailed as Adobe PDF files (not JPG images or Word documents) to EHPrograms@ketteringhealth.org before the deadline. If you have questions about how to complete these forms, please contact your campus Employee Health department.

13. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) If I'm pregnant, can I receive an exemption?

Based on the CMS rule, Kettering Health can no longer accept temporary deferrals granted to those who attested to being pregnant. Anyone granted temporary exemptions is now considered non-compliant with the vaccine requirement and must be vaccinated or apply for and be granted a legally required medical or religious exemption by the deadlines outlined to be considered compliant.

Women who are pregnant may submit a request for a medical exemption. However, per the CMS rules, they must have a licensed practitioner sign their medical exemption form confirming the recognized clinical contraindications for the vaccine and stating which COVID-19 vaccines are not recommended. We did not previously require this information from a licensed practitioner to grant this or any other temporary exemption. To submit a medical exemption request, follow the process described in FAQ #12.

Kettering Health, the CDC, and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommend pregnant women be vaccinated against COVID-19 because they are at risk for more severe illness. We understand that some of our team members who are pregnant may still have concerns, so we organized a special panel discussion with women's health providers, where they answered questions that were submitted by our own team members. [Click here](#) to watch the discussion.

14. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) If I'm breastfeeding, can I request an exemption?

Based on the CMS rule, Kettering Health will no longer accept temporary deferrals granted to those who attested to breastfeeding. Individuals who held a temporary exemption must either meet the vaccine requirements, or if they believe they may be eligible for a legally required medical or religious exemption, they should submit one before 11:59 p.m. on November 24, using the process outlined in FAQ #12.

We understand that some of our team members may still have concerns, so we organized a special panel discussion about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for women, specifically around the vaccine's potential impact on pregnancy, fertility, and breastfeeding. with women's health providers, where they answered questions that were submitted by our own team members. [Click here](#) to watch the discussion where women's health providers answered questions that were submitted by our own team members.

15. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) If I'm trying to conceive, can I request a temporary exemption?

Temporary exemptions, like the temporary exemption for individuals trying to conceive, that only required an attestation from the applicant can no longer be honored. Individuals holding a temporary exemption must meet the requirements through the vaccination process or through being granted a medical or religious exemption. To be eligible for a medical exemption, an individual must submit a medical exemption request form signed by a licensed practitioner confirming the recognized clinical contraindications for the vaccine and stating which COVID-19 vaccines are not recommended. Individuals who believe they qualify for a medical exemption should consult with their provider and may submit an exemption request with the required information. To submit a medical exemption request, follow the process described in FAQ #12.

We understand that some of our team members who are pregnant may still have concerns, so we organized a special panel discussion with women's health providers, where they answered questions that were submitted by our own team members. [Click here](#) to watch the discussion.

16. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) What are the dates I need to be aware of?

Audience	Exemption Request Deadline	Deadline to receive first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine	Deadline to receive final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine
Employees	November 24	December 5	January 4
Medical Staff – Employed	November 24	December 5	January 4
Medical Staff – Non-employed	November 24	December 5	January 4
Volunteers	November 24	December 5	January 4
Contractors and Vendors	November 24	December 5	January 4
Students – Non-Kettering College	November 24	December 5	January 4
Students – Kettering College	November 24	December 5	January 4

17. Do I need to get a certain vaccine brand?

No, you can get any of the COVID-19 vaccines that were approved for emergency use by the FDA. All of the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective and will help prevent COVID-19—regardless of what kind you get.

18. What does the vaccine cost?

There are no out-of-pocket costs for the COVID-19 vaccine, but insurance will be billed. If you do not have insurance, you still qualify for the vaccine with no out-of-pocket cost. If on Medicare, please be sure to locate and bring your traditional Medicare ID card to your vaccination.

19. (UPDATED August 10, 2021) Is the seasonal flu vaccination still required, too? How, if at all, will the COVID-19 vaccine requirement affect the annual flu vaccine campaign?

Yes, Kettering Health team members are required to receive the flu vaccine, or have an approved medical or religious exemption, each fall. More details will be available in the coming months about this year’s flu vaccine clinics.

There is no impact of the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on the requirement for all employees to receive their annual flu shot. The CDC does not limit other vaccinations before, with, or after the COVID-19 vaccine. Employees who have an exemption for one vaccine must still apply for an exemption for the other vaccine if they believe they are precluded from being vaccinated for medical or religious reasons.

20. (UPDATED August 20, 2021) Will I be allowed paid time off to get the vaccine?

If you are a non-exempt/hourly employee, we will provide you with 1 hour of pay for each vaccine appointment you need to attend (1 or 2, depending which vaccine you choose to receive). You should work with your leader to plan for your vaccine appointment, and we ask

that you try to schedule that appointment when you are not scheduled to work the following day.

We will also be providing compensation for non-exempt (hourly) employees who received their vaccine prior to August 8. These employees will see one hour of pay for each dose added to their December 16 paycheck as a thank-you for taking that important step to protect our community and cover any time used for a vaccination appointment. The payment will show on employees' pay stubs under Vaccine Time.

21. (UPDATED August 11, 2021) If I experience side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine and can't come to work, will I receive paid time off?

Employees are encouraged to receive the vaccine when they will be off the next day to minimize the need to call off related to a vaccine reaction. Employees should report the absence to their department using normal call-in procedures and call their campus Employee Health office to report the reaction. If employees are unable to perform their job duties because of a reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, they should take PTO for scheduled hours missed. If an individual does not have PTO hours, Kettering Health will cover up to one shift based on the reaction.

22. If my employment is terminated for not complying with this policy, and I later change my mind, am I eligible for rehire?

Yes, if you become vaccinated against COVID-19, you are eligible for rehire. You will not be guaranteed your previous position, but you can apply to open positions.

23. I'm under the age of 18. Do I need parental consent to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, if you are under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must complete a consent form that you'll receive before being vaccinated. Currently, minors are eligible to receive only the Pfizer vaccine.

24. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) Are all Kettering Health locations requiring vaccination?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine is required for all employees, employed and non-employed medical staff, volunteers, contractors, vendors, and students. Remote workers who provide services 100% remote and who work more than 100 miles from the Kettering Health facility where they would work onsite are exempt from the vaccine requirement.

25. Where can I learn more about the vaccine?

Learn all about COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination planning in the United States and Ohio.

- [CDC General COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
- [FDA COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
- [Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
- [Pfizer Coronavirus Vaccine](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

26. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) Will new hires have to be vaccinated to be eligible for employment at Kettering Health?

Yes. And, anyone hired after December 5 will need to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to starting their employment with Kettering Health (or be granted a legally required medical or religious exemption). Within their first 30 days of employment, they must receive all required doses of the vaccine (or have a legally required exemption).

27. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) What if I am currently on a leave of absence? Am I required to be vaccinated and, if so, when?

Anyone currently on a leave of absence must receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by December 5 or prior to their return to work (if that date is after December 5) or be granted a legally required medical or religious exemption. Within 30 days of their return to work, they must receive all required doses of the vaccine (or have a legally required exemption).

28. Am I required to get my COVID-19 vaccine at a Kettering Health vaccination clinic?

No. You may get the COVID-19 vaccine wherever you choose, but we will provide you with information and availability to get the COVID-19 vaccine at a Kettering Health vaccination location if that's what works best for you.

(UPDATED August 10, 2021) Employees, volunteers, employed and non-employed medical staff, and those who do business with Kettering Health can [click here](#) to schedule an appointment at our Kettering Health Vaccine Clinic at 2040 Dorothy Lane Ave. in Kettering. This site is open specifically for this group to ensure easy access to the vaccine. Kettering Health On-Demand Care clinics are also offering the COVID-19 vaccine, and appointments can be scheduled at those locations by [clicking here](#).

Note: Appointments for all clinic locations are preferred, but walk-ins are welcome.

If you would prefer getting the vaccine from a non-network clinic, you can find a full list of local COVID-19 vaccine providers by [clicking here](#).

29. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) What should I do if I received my first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine over 6 weeks ago and I have not received the second dose?

If you have had one dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, you will only need one more dose of the same vaccine to complete the series. If you received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine or will receive the Johnson and Johnson vaccine by December 5, one dose is all that is necessary.

30. (UPDATED November 12, 2021) What should I do if I wish to submit a medical exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine, but I cannot get in to see my doctor and my doctor will not complete the exemption paperwork until after the established exemption request deadline (November 24, 2021)?

If you have scheduled a doctor's appointment for a medical exemption and it is after the deadline, please contact Employee Health at EHPPrograms@ketteringhealth.org as soon as possible and before the deadline of 11:59 p.m. on November 24 with confirmation of your

scheduled appointment time. Exemptions submitted after the November 24 deadline without prior communication to Employee Health regarding a reason for delay will not be accepted.

31. **(UPDATED November 12, 2021)** If I receive my first dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine and become infected with COVID-19 before my second dose, what should I do?

The second dose should be given on schedule if symptoms have resolved.

32. **(NEW August 11, 2021)** Are there exclusions for coverage under Kettering Health's benefits plans for claims related to COVID-19 vaccine reactions because the vaccines are only authorized for emergency use by the FDA?

No. Kettering Health's benefit plans (e.g. health, disability and life) do not have exclusions for claims related to adverse reactions to any COVID-19 vaccine on the basis that the vaccines are authorized for emergency use by the FDA.

33. **(NEW August 13, 2021)** Am I required to have a weekly COVID-19 test if I am granted an exemption?

No. Employees that have an exemption are not currently required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing.

34. **(UPDATED November 12, 2021)** If I am granted an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement, what COVID-19 policies and procedures for non-vaccinated employees will I be required to follow?

Employees who are presently unvaccinated for COVID-19 and remain unvaccinated after January 4, 2022—but are in compliance with Kettering Health's vaccine requirement due to an approved exemption—must continue to follow the safety protocols outlined by Incident Command. Those protocols include masking, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and contacting Employee Health if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

CDC and regulatory guidance have evolved over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and may continue to evolve, resulting in updates/modifications to the safety protocols our employees must follow. If there are changes from what is in place today, we will provide updates, so employees are aware of their obligations in the workplace.

35. **(NEW November 12, 2021)** What exemptions are being revoked by Kettering Health? Why is this happening?

Based on the CMS rule, Kettering Health can no longer accept temporary exemptions granted to individuals who presented proof of positive COVID-19 antibodies and those who attested to being pregnant, trying to conceive, or breastfeeding.

36. **(NEW November 12, 2021)** If I was previously granted a temporary exemption/deferral to the COVID-19 vaccine requirement, can I submit a medical or religious exemption?

Yes. All employees, volunteers, students, and non-employed members of the medical staff may submit medical or religious exemption requests to the COVID-19 vaccine requirement until **November 24, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.** Updated exemption forms are available by clicking here.

Note: You must be connected to Kettering Health's network to access these forms. Submissions must be emailed as Adobe PDF files (not JPG or Word documents) to EHPrograms@ketteringhealth.org before the deadline.

37. (NEW November 12, 2021) Are other hospitals that did not previously implement a COVID-19 vaccine requirement going to implement one now?

In order to comply with the CMS rule, all Medicare and Medicaid-certified facilities must implement a COVID-19 vaccine requirement. According to that requirement, the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine must be received by December 5 and the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine must be received by January 4.

38. (NEW November 12, 2021) Is the December 1 deadline to become fully vaccinated for COVID-19 still in place?

No. We have updated our COVID-19 vaccine timeline to align with the CMS rule. Those deadlines are addressed in FAQ #8.

39. (NEW November 12, 2021) If I was previously denied an exemption, may I submit another exemption?

It depends. If your exemption was heard by the committees and denied, you may not submit the same exemption again. If you think you may be eligible for a different exemption, you may submit an exemption on that qualifying basis. For example, if you applied for and were denied a religious exemption, you may apply for a medical exemption before the deadline if you have an evidence-based medical contraindication.

If you submitted an exemption after October 15 and were denied solely because it was submitted late, you must resubmit your exemption before the deadline for review.

40. (NEW November 12, 2021) If my exemption was denied, can I appeal?

Yes, if your exemption is denied, you may submit an appeal using the form delivered to you in the denial email. Appeals must be submitted to EHPrograms@ketteringhealth.org within 72 hours of the denial, which includes weekends. For example, if your exemption was denied on Thursday, it must be received by email on or before Sunday. Late appeals will not be accepted.

41. (NEW November 12, 2021) I am scheduled to be out on or during the exemption deadline. What should I do?

You should submit your exemption before the deadline. Considerations will be made for individuals who were on a leave of absence during the entire exemption window. Late exemptions will not be accepted.