New Mexico Department of Health Guidance on 2025-2026 COVID-19 Vaccine Administration

Background

On August 27, 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved updated COVID-19 vaccines for the 2025–2026 respiratory viral season. While narrowing the indications for the COVID-19 vaccines, the FDA did not raise any new safety concerns. To date, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has not released official recommendations regarding the use of these vaccines.

Given this background, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is issuing evidence-based recommendations to support clinical decision-making and public health planning for the upcoming season. This guidance is intended to assist healthcare providers in identifying populations for whom COVID-19 vaccination is currently advised. In general, given the constrained healthcare resources in the state, NMDOH recommends broad access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

This guidance document is based on review of guidance released by other medical professional organizations and the Vaccine Integrity Project Evidence Review. Where no new evidence review exists, NMDOH relied on ACIP and ACP guidance from the 2024-2025 season. NMDOH will review and revise this guidance as necessary following the release of new evidence or evidence-based recommendations from medical professional organizations.

This document outlines population-based recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination but does not include specific product, formulation, or dosing guidance.

FDA Approval

1. Pfizer's COMIRNATY is approved for:
    - adults ages 65 years and older
    - people ages 5 through 64 years who have at least one condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19
2. Moderna's SPIKEVAX is approved for:
    - adults ages 65 years and older
    - people ages 6 months through 64 years who have at least one condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19
3. Moderna's MNEXSPIKE is approved for:
    - adults 65 years and older
    - people ages 12 through 64 years who have at least one condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19
4. Novavax's NUVAXOVID is approved for:
    - adults 65 years and older
    - people ages 12 through 64 years who have at least one condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19

High Risk Conditions and Demographic Factors

The FDA did not define "high risk" in their approvals; however, as of September 3, 2025, the CDC has an evidence-based resource on their website: Underlying Conditions and the Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19 | COVID-19 | CDC. In this New England Journal of Medicine article outlining regulatory framework for future COVID-19 vaccine licensing, the authors (from the FDA) included this CDC list of conditions that confer higher risk of severe disease. This list has been reproduced in **Appendix A** of this document along with additional conditions recommended for pediatric patients by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Healthcare practitioners should consider the patient's age, underlying medical conditions, patient demographics, and vaccination status in determining the risk of severe COVID-19-associated outcomes for all patients. Age remains the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes, with over 65 and under 2 being most at risk. Additionally, being unvaccinated or not being up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations increases the risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes[1].

COVID-19 Vaccine for Pediatrics

NMDOH recommends that providers follow the guidance issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics: Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccines in Infants, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics.

COVID-19 continues to be a cause of hospitalization and death in the pediatric population, especially under two years of age. COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy provides passive immunity to infants under six months until they are old enough to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective in protecting individuals and populations against serious outcomes associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection, including post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC) and multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)[2].

AAP Guidelines recommend age-appropriate 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine for:
All infants and children 6 through 23 months of age
Children and adolescents 2 through 18 years of age in the following risk groups • Persons at high risk of severe COVID-19 • Residents of long-term care facilities or other congregate settings • Persons who have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 • Persons whose household contacts are at high risk for severe COVID-19

[1] Underlying Conditions and the Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19 | COVID-19 | CDC

[2] American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases. Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccines in Infants, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement. Pediatrics. 2025; doi: 10.1542/peds.2025-073924

Children 6 months through 18 years of age who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. This group may require 2 or more doses of age-appropriate 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine depending on previous vaccination status.
Children 2 through 18 years of age not included in the risk groups above whose parent or guardian desires their protection from COVID-19.

COVID Vaccine for Pregnant Individuals

NMDOH recommends that providers follow the August 2025 guidance issued by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology: COVID-19 Vaccination Considerations for Obstetric–Gynecologic Care | ACOG.

Affirming the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant people, one of ACOG's Key Recommendations includes: *COVID-19 vaccine safety during pregnancy has been well established. There is no evidence of increased risk of negative maternal, pregnancy, or infant outcomes associated with vaccination* (Ciapponi 2024) [3]. In addition, vaccination during pregnancy provides passive immunity to the infant, protecting them from COVID-19 in the first few months of life before they can be vaccinated.

There is no preferential recommendation for the use of any one of the currently FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines over another for pregnant, recently pregnant, contemplating pregnancy, or lactating people.

ACOG Guidelines recommend the 2025-2026 COVID vaccine for:
All pregnant, recently pregnant and lactating individuals
Individuals contemplating pregnancy

COVID Vaccine for Adults

To date, there have been no guidelines from professional medical organizations for the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccination for adults. COVID-19 vaccines have consistently demonstrated a strong safety profile in adults, with extensive post-authorization surveillance data confirming low rates of serious adverse events and significant protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

CDC publishes an evidence-based list of conditions and treatments that put people at risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19 (see Appendix A). Age remains the strongest risk factor for severe outcomes from COVID-19. In addition, data has shown that compared to non-Hispanic white people, people from racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. Once infected, people from racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to be hospitalized, be admitted to the ICU, and die from COVID-19 at younger ages.

[3] Ciapponi, A., Berrueta, M., Argento, F.J. *et al.* Safety and Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines During Pregnancy: A Living Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Drug Saf* 47, 991–1010 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40264-024-01458-w

DOH Guidelines recommend the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine for adults:
People ages 65 years and older
People 19 years – 64 with underlying conditions (see appendix A)
COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for persons living in long-term care or congregate settings
Healthcare personnel
People whose household contacts are at high risk for severe COVID-19
Healthy individuals ages 2 through 64 years who desire protection from COVID-19

Summary of NMDOH Recommendations for Use:

1. COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to all persons aged 65 years and older.
2. COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to all persons aged 6 months to 24 months.
3. COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to all persons aged 2 - 64 years at high risk of serious adverse outcomes from COVID-19 infection, and to caregivers or individuals cohabitating with individuals at high risk of serious health outcomes. (see Appendix A)
4. COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to all pregnant, recently pregnant, and lactating individuals.
5. COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to all persons living in long-term care or congregate settings
6. COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to all healthy individuals ages 2 through 64 years who desire protection from COVID-19.
7. Additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine may be offered at the discretion of the healthcare provider to all persons with immune compromise, based on the individual's clinical circumstances.
8. Persons with immune-compromise or underlying conditions may self-attest to their moderately or severely immunocompromised status or high-risk condition and receive COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccinators should not deny COVID-19 vaccination to a person due to lack of documentation.

Reporting of Adverse Events

Adverse events should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Reporting is encouraged for any clinically significant adverse event, even when a causal association between the vaccine and the event is uncertain. Vaccination errors should also be reported to VAERS. Additional information is available at https://vaers.hhs.gov or by telephone at 1-800-822-7967.

References:

1. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases. Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccines in Infants, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement. Pediatrics. 2025; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2025-073924.
2. COVID-19 Vaccination Considerations for Obstetric–Gynecologic Care | ACOG
3. Underlying Conditions and the Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19 | COVID-19 | CDC
4. Prasad, V. Makary, M. An Evidence-Based Approach to Covid-19 Vaccination. *N Engl J Med* 2025;392: 2484-2486. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMsb2506929.
5. Vaccine Integrity project

Appendix A – High Risk Conditions

CDC/AAP 2025 List of Medical Conditions that Increase a Person's Risk of Severe COVID-19
Asthma
Cancer Hematologic malignancies
Cardiovascular disease (including congenital heart disease) *
Cerebrovascular disease
Chronic kidney disease People receiving dialysis
Chronic lung disease is limited to the following: Bronchiectasis COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) Interstitial lung disease Pulmonary embolism Pulmonary hypertension
Chronic liver disease limited to the following: Cirrhosis Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease Alcoholic liver disease Autoimmune hepatitis
Cystic fibrosis
Diabetes mellitus, type 1
Diabetes mellitus, type 2
Gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., feeding tube dependent, inflammatory bowel disease) *
Gestational diabetes
Disabilities, including Down syndrome (see also Appendix B)
Heart conditions (such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies)
Hematologic disease (e.g., Sickle Cell) *
Hepatic disease*
Immunodeficiency disorders (e.g., Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV], primary immunodeficiency*, receipt of immunosuppressive therapy*, receipt of hematopoietic cell transplant or solid organ transplant*
Mental health conditions limited to the following: Mood disorders, including depression Schizophrenia spectrum disorders
Metabolic disorders*
Neurologic conditions (e.g., dementia, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy*, intellectual developmental disorder*, epilepsy*, compromised mobility/wheelchair dependent*)
Obesity (BMI >= 30 or >= 95th percentile in children
Physical inactivity
Pregnancy and recent pregnancy
Rheumatologic, autoimmune disease* (e.g., systemic lupus erythematosus, juvenile idiopathic arthritis)
Smoking, current and former
Solid-organ or blood stem-cell transplantation
Tuberculosis

Use of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medications

*Additional conditions per the American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement Aug. 2025

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, February 6). *Underlying conditions and the higher risk for severe COVID-19*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/underlying-conditions.html. Accessed 03 Sept. 2025.

Appendix B – List of Disabilities (from the CDC)

Complete List of Disabilities from CDC's Systematic Review Process
• Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
• Autism
• Cerebral palsy
• Charcot foot
• Chromosomal disorders
• Chromosome 17 and 19 deletions
• Chromosome 18q deletion
• Cognitive impairment
• Congenital hydrocephalus
• Congenital malformations
• Deafness/hearing loss
• Disability indicated by Barthel Index
• Down syndrome
• Fahr's syndrome
• Fragile X syndrome
• Gaucher disease
• Hand and foot disorders
• Learning disabilities
• Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON) or Autosomal dominant optic atrophy (ADOA)
• Leigh syndrome
• Limitations with self-care or activities of daily living
• Maternal inherited diabetes and deafness (MIDD)
• Mitochondrial encephalopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes (MELAS) and risk markers
• Mobility disability
• Movement disorders
• Multiple disability (referred to in research papers as "bedridden disability")
• Multisystem disease
• Myoclonic epilepsy with ragged red fibers (MERRF)
• Myotonic dystrophy
• Neurodevelopmental disorders
• Neuromuscular disorders
• Neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMOSD)
• Neuropathy, ataxia, and retinitis pigmentosa (NARP)
• Perinatal spastic hemiparesis
• Primary mitochondrial myopathy (PMM)
• Progressive supranuclear palsy
• Senior-Loken syndrome

• Severe and complex disability (referred to in research papers as "polyhandicap disability")
• Spina bifida and other nervous system anomalies
• Spinal cord injury
• Tourette syndrome
• Traumatic brain injury
• Visual impairment/blindness
• Wheelchair use

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, February 6). *Underlying conditions and the higher risk for severe COVID-19*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/underlying-conditions.html. Accessed 03 Sept. 2025.