



FAQ – COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

Is Wellstar requiring all team members to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. To protect the health and safety of our team members, caregivers and those we serve, Wellstar Health System is joining leading health systems and requiring leaders to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by August 15, 2021 and to be fully vaccinated by Sept. 15, 2021, with all other team members and caregivers vaccinated by Oct. 1, 2021.

If I do not work directly with patients, do I still have to get vaccinated? Yes. All team members must be vaccinated, including providers privileged to practice medicine at Wellstar; medical, nursing and allied health trainees; students; clergy; researchers; contract personnel; vendor representatives; and volunteers.

Are team members who work entirely remotely subject to the vaccination policy?

Yes. Remote team members are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Wellstar is requiring leaders to be fully vaccinated by Sept. 15, 2021, with all other team members and caregivers vaccinated by Oct. 1, 2021.

Why is Wellstar implementing this new policy regarding the COVID-19 vaccine?

Requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for team members and caregivers reflects Wellstar's commitment to protecting the health and safety of our team members, caregivers, patients and communities. New, highly transmissible variants of COVID-19 are increasing infections and hospitalizations in Georgia and across the country, particularly affecting unvaccinated people.

Vaccines have proven to be safe and effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19. Requiring all team members as well as providers privileged to practice medicine at Wellstar; medical, nursing and allied health trainees; students; clergy; researchers; contract personnel; vendor representatives; and volunteers to get vaccinated against COVID-19 will ensure Wellstar continues to be a safe place to work and for our patients to seek care.

Is there a date by which team member/caregivers must receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

All Wellstar team members and caregivers must be **fully** vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 1, unless approved for a medical or religious exemption. Pregnant team members can choose to defer vaccination until after their delivery. Leaders are required to get their first dose by Aug. 15, 2021 and to be fully vaccinated by Sept. 15, 2021.

What are the consequences if I do not get the COVID-19 vaccine before the deadline?

COVID-19 vaccination is a requirement for employment at Wellstar unless you have an approved medical or religious exemption. Team members without an approved exemption who fail to be vaccinated against COVID-19 will be placed on unpaid administrative leave for up to 30 days. If, after 30 days, the team member is still not vaccinated, termination of employment will occur.



What documentation do I have to provide for a medical exemption?

As with the flu shot, team members seeking a medical exemption must follow Wellstar's process to request a medical exemption through the Wellstar Health System form. Medical exemption requests must be completed and signed by a licensed medical provider and submitted to Employee Health no later than Sept. 24, 2021 (for team members), or by Sept. 8 (for leaders).

What documentation do I have to provide for a religious exemption?

As with the flu shot, team members seeking a religious exemption must follow Wellstar's process to request a religious-exemption through the Wellstar Health System form. Religious exemption requests must be completed and submitted to Employee Health by Sept. 24, 2021 (for team members), or by Sept. 8 (for leaders).

What if I receive a religious or medical exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine?

Wellstar team members who receive an exemption from the vaccine based on religious beliefs or a medical condition will be required to take additional appropriate measures while at work to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Team members who are granted an exemption may be excluded from patient care areas and job duties and may have to observe additional masking and PPE requirements.

What if I request a medical or religious exemption, but do not receive it?

Anyone who does not receive a medical or religious exemption will need to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Team members without an approved exemption who fail to be vaccinated against COVID-19 will be placed on unpaid administrative leave for up to 30 days. If, after 30 days, the team member is still not vaccinated, termination of employment will occur.

What if I choose not to be vaccinated?

Team members who choose not to be vaccinated without an approved exemption will be placed on unpaid, administrative leave until they are fully vaccinated. If, after 30 days, the team member is still not vaccinated, termination of employment will occur.

If a booster shot is needed in the future, will that be required as well?

Yes. Similar to the annual flu shot, team members will need to remain current on all of the required vaccination protocols to be considered fully vaccinated from COVID-19.

What will be acceptable forms of proof of vaccination?

The CDC vaccination card is the primary source of acceptable proof of vaccination. Other acceptable sources may include proof of vaccination from your local retail pharmacy or state department of public health. All documentation must include your name, **EID#**, vaccine manufacturer, number of doses and date received.

What if I misplaced my official COVID-19 vaccination card?

Employee Health does not replace lost vaccination cards, but you may request a copy of your official Georgia Registry of Immunizations Transactions and Services (GRITS) report from the Employee Health team at your site.

Is Wellstar offering all of the current COVID-19 vaccines?

Wellstar is currently administering the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at [convenient locations across the system](#).



Where can I go to get my COVID-19 vaccine?

To support our team members and caregivers, Wellstar will continue providing the free vaccine at [convenient locations across the system](#). In addition, team members can check [vaccines.gov](#) to find a convenient location, or go to their local pharmacy.

When will the COVID-19 vaccines receive full approval by the FDA?

Full FDA approval for vaccines against COVID-19 is expected later this year. The FDA has indicated that full approval for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine could be completed as early as August 2021.

Why is Wellstar requiring the COVID-19 vaccine before it receives full FDA approval?

The rapid spread of the highly transmissible COVID-19 Delta variant is increasing infections in Georgia and across the country, particularly affecting unvaccinated people. The COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed safely to more than one billion people worldwide and have proven to be remarkably safe and effective. Given the concerning spread of the Delta variant and the clear scientific evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine is effective, we must urgently prioritize the health and safety of our people and our patients.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed safely to more than one billion people worldwide and have proven to be remarkably effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19. Scientific evidence indicates that:

- COVID-19 vaccinations are safe and effective at reducing both the risk of becoming infected and spreading the infection to others.
- The COVID-19 virus has a significant risk of transmission both before the onset of symptoms and in the absence of symptoms.
- The risks of COVID-19 are substantially higher among unvaccinated individuals and those with underlying health conditions. Risks include severe illness, death and long-term adverse impacts to health.

How many team members/caregivers at Wellstar are fully vaccinated?

Approximately 60% of our team members are fully vaccinated, and we look forward to ensuring the rest of our team members receive their vaccine in the coming weeks.

Who can I contact if I have any additional questions about this new policy?

If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine requirement at Wellstar, please speak with your manager or contact your local HR representative.

Important Reminders –

COVID-19 Testing at Wellstar

As part of our commitment to help Georgia fight COVID-19, Wellstar Health System is offering COVID-19 diagnostic testing — including PCR and rapid antigen COVID-19 tests — as well as antibody testing across our hospitals, health parks, medical offices, pediatric locations and urgent care centers. [Learn more](#).



Travel & Meeting Guidelines

- **Work-Related Travel:** All business travel is currently on hold. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 positivity rates and announce any updates, as needed.
- **Postpone hosting colleagues from other institutions at Wellstar until further notice.**
 - Visiting colleagues will not be allowed to directly interact with our patients except in a narrow band of circumstances, and they will be omitted from procedures and rounding.
 - Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs will continue as stipulated by the individual program directors.
 - Final candidates for employment at Wellstar may be permitted to visit the campus for final interviews subject to all precautions recommended by CDC COVID -19 site.

- **Virtual meetings are recommended, when possible.** If you must host an in-person meeting with Wellstar team members in non-clinical areas, masking, social distancing (6 feet) and frequent hand washing is required for all attendees.

- **Work-related professional and community meetings hosted outside of Wellstar are permitted with the following precautions:**
 - Team member must be fully vaccinated.
 - Meeting site follows the same precautions as Wellstar, including masking, social distancing and hand hygiene.
 - Community groups/tours are currently not permitted at our hospitals.