



**COVID-19  
RESPONSE  
VACCINES**

# UN SYSTEM-WIDE COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

## FACTSHEET FOR UN SYSTEM RETIREES

VERSION: 19 MAY 2021

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## 1. ARE UN SYSTEM RETIREES ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE VACCINE THROUGH THE UN SYSTEM-WIDE COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME?

Yes, UN System Retirees in receipt of a periodic pension benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) or from the IMF Staff Retirement Plan (SRP), or the World Bank SRP who have established their normal place of residence in a country where the UN System-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is carried out, are eligible for the Programme.

Please note that the UN programme is intended to supplement and complement national vaccination programmes and the COVAX initiative. As such, UN system retirees are expected in the first instance to receive vaccinations through the respective host country national programmes when available, and individuals who do not fall in the eligible categories would be expected to be covered by those national vaccination programmes. Based on supply of vaccine and changing conditions in countries, this document may be updated as appropriate.

## 2. HOW WILL THE UN PRIORITIZE VACCINATIONS FOR RETIREES IN THE UN SYSTEM-WIDE COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME?

The UN will base its prioritization roadmap for UN personnel and eligible dependents on the [WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts \(SAGE\) Roadmap](#) for prioritizing uses of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of limited supply. This roadmap allows for individuals who are at greater risk of exposure to the virus, or who will likely suffer a more severe course of illness if contracting the virus to receive the vaccine first. Such priority groups include health care workers and other front-line workers, as well as older adults, and those of any age with underlying health conditions.



Please note that the Programme is primarily a workplace occupational health programme to allow UN Personnel to stay and deliver on mandates with confidence. As such, active workers in high-risk occupations will be prioritized, and retirees may not have access to vaccine in the first rounds.

It should be noted that all UN personnel receiving the vaccines from national authorities should adhere to the local health authorities' directives on prioritization of individuals. While WHO makes recommendations for prioritization, not all countries follow exactly the sequence outlined in the [WHO prioritization roadmap](#).

### 3. HOW DO I REGISTER FOR MY VACCINATION?

The [UN System-Wide Covid-19 Vaccination Programme](#) uses the Everbridge platform to register eligible retirees for the vaccination rollout in their countries of residence (as on file with their responsible pension plans).

There are two ways in which a retiree can register on the Registration Platform:

- If your data was preloaded by your sponsoring organization/pension plan (e.g. UNJSPF), you will receive an independent link by email to review your information and complete your registration; or
- If you are part of the eligible retiree population, however, your data could not be preloaded by your sponsoring organizations/pension plan, you will be able to self-register on the registration platform. If you are unsure whether your data was preloaded, please [contact the Local Vaccination Deployment Team/ Coordinator](#) in your country of residence, to confirm with them whether self-registration is open for your country and provide you with a link to the self registration platform.

#### For UNJSPF retirees

**Eligible UNJSPF retirees can be registered for vaccination in one of the following two ways:**

##### **Retiree Pre-registration by UNJSPF:**

For those eligible UNJSPF retirees who have an email address on record with the Fund, the Fund was able to preload their data to the UN vaccination platform Everbridge. Once the UN vaccine deployment starts in their country of residence, they will receive a system-generated email from Everbridge with a link to complete their registration.

##### **Retiree Self-registration:**

For those retirees who do not have an email address on file with the Fund, they cannot be pre-registered in the vaccination registration platform but will need to self-register first. Upon local deployment, they will be notified by the Local Vaccination Deployment Team/Coordinator when self-registration is open for their country/duty station and a link will be provided to you. If you are unsure whether your data was preloaded, please [contact the Local Vaccination Deployment Team/Coordinator](#) in your country of residence to confirm with them whether self-registration is open for your country/duty station and provide you with a link to the self registration platform.



#### 4. WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

The UN vaccination programme is managed and coordinated by the UN Department of Operational Support. The UNJSPF is merely a data provider for this initiative and does not take part in the decision-making processes pertaining to the vaccination programme. As such, the Fund is **not** in a position to answer queries about the programme.

Eligible UN system retirees should [contact the Local Vaccine Deployment Team/Coordinator in their country/duty station for questions or email \[covidvaccine@un.org\]\(mailto:covidvaccine@un.org\)](#).

#### 5. WILL THE VACCINE BE FREE OF CHARGE / COVERED UNDER THE MEDICAL INSURANCE PLANS?

Yes. Similar to other vaccines, coverage of the vaccine is foreseen under the medical plans when recommended by the local health authorities and/or the WHO, and when vaccines are not offered free of charge by national governments.

#### 6. WHICH VACCINE IS THE UN ADMINISTERING AS PART OF OF THE UN SYSTEM-WIDE COVID-19 PROGRAMME?

The UN has acquired doses of Covishield, the version of AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, approved under emergency use listing procedures (EUL) by WHO. The UN expects to acquire or receive donations of other EUL WHO-approved vaccine doses as they become available. See COVISHIELD fact Sheet [here](#).

#### 7. IS THE OXFORD-ASTRAZENECA/COVISHIELD VACCINE SAFE?

The available science indicates that the Oxford-AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine is highly effective and safe to take. It prevents severe disease, hospitalization, and is saving lives.

As of 9 April, almost 200 million individuals had received the AZ vaccine. Among those, a small number of individuals (reportedly, 1 in 100,000) has experienced rare types of thromboembolic events (unusual blood clots with low blood platelets). Reported incidence is variable, ranging from 1 /100,000,000 to 1/100,000 vaccination. This is an area of ongoing study to understand true risk. These rare events have prompted a thorough assessment of all available data by WHO's Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GAVCS) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) with a view to ascertain whether a causal link with the AZ vaccine can be established.

On 7 April 2021, the GACVS and the EMA as well as other national health authorities in Europe all issued statements indicating that:

1. A causal relationship between the vaccine and the occurrence of these thromboembolic events is considered plausible but is not confirmed.
2. The events are very rare and therefore, if there is a causal link, the risk is extremely low. In comparison, as of 7 April 2021, at least 2.86 million people worldwide have died of COVID-19, and infections continue to rise.
3. The benefits of taking the AZ vaccine far outweigh the very rare potential risks. Specialized studies are needed to fully understand the potential relationship between vaccination and possible risk factors, such as gender or age as well as comorbidities or other factors which so far have not been identified. However, out of an abundance of caution, some countries decided to restrict the vaccine to certain categories of population.



See full GAVCVS statement [here](#).

In sum, while the vaccine may cause severe blood clotting events, such events were deemed by all health experts as very rare, and not altering the risk/benefit balance, which remains overwhelmingly in favour of getting the AZ vaccine, if and when available. In case of doubt, you are advised to consult with your health care provider.

The above information is dynamic and subject to change. As more information becomes available, this FAQ will be updated.

## **8. SHALL I EXPECT SIDE EFFECTS FOLLOWING THE AZ VACCINE, AND ARE ANY OF THESE SIDE EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER OR AGE?**

Serious side effects may occur from any vaccine but are extremely rare. It is important to remember that we are witnessing the largest mass vaccination campaign in history, and some rare reactions are to be expected.

Whilst mild and local side effects within two/ three days following vaccination are expected and common, individuals who experience any severe symptoms potentially related to blood clotting – such as shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling, persistent abdominal pain, neurological symptoms, such as severe and persistent headaches or blurred vision, tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection – typically around 4 to 20 days following vaccination - should seek urgent medical attention.

Unusual blood clots with low blood platelets (as reported after vaccination with the AZ vaccine) should be considered as extremely rare side effects presenting a low risk. While the rare event seems to occur more frequently among women of younger age, more studies are needed to know whether females are really at greater risk since in general there have been more women who have received the vaccine.

Those who develop severe symptoms after receiving the vaccine should seek medical attention immediately. By recognising the signs of bloods clots and treating them early, healthcare professionals can help those affected in their recovery and avoid complications.

## **9. WILL I BE OFFERED A CHOICE OF VACCINE?**

At this time, in most countries, people will not be able to choose the kind or the brand of vaccine they want. This, however, could change as other vaccines are authorized for use and vaccine supplies increase.

## **10. WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO RECEIVE THE SPECIFIC TYPE OF VACCINE OFFERED TO ME?**

It will be up to the individual to decide if they want to be vaccinated or not and whether they want to accept the type of vaccination being offered by the national/ host country or the UN. It is also important to remember that UN personnel are also expected to comply with all requirements mandated by the host country and national authorities.



## 11. WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

- For questions please contact [the Local Vaccine Deployment Coordinator](#) in your location.
- You may also write to [covidvaccine@un.org](mailto:covidvaccine@un.org)
- Please see UN System-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme FAQs in English [here](#), and in French [here](#).
- Additional information about the Programme on un.org [here](#).