

COVID-19 Vaccine & How to Avoid Wastage

While vaccine wastage is not unusual, due to the precious nature of COVID-19 vaccine, it is important to use every tool and strategy at our disposal to make sure every available dose of COVID-19 vaccine is given in our state. It is not vaccines, but the act of vaccinating, that saves lives. One dose can mean the difference of life or death for a vaccine recipient considered at high risk from COVID-19 infection.

It is important to *plan ahead* for your vaccination clinic.

With careful planning, vaccine wastage can be avoided.

- Use every **full** dose available in the vial. Occasionally, it is possible to obtain extra doses from COVID-19 vaccine multi-dose vials (>5 doses of Pfizer vaccine and >10 doses of Moderna vaccine).
- Once a vaccine vial is punctured, all doses must be used within six hours.

IMPORTANT TIP: Under no circumstances should COVID-19 vaccine be wasted.

Use a registration system when planning and hosting a COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

- Use electronic health records to their fullest capacity to identify, prepare, and invite patients to your vaccination clinic.
- [PrepMod](#) can help facilities plan and set up clinics and control appointment times and number of patients per appointment to allow for social distancing.
- The [North Dakota vaccine locator](#) is an invaluable resource for North Dakotans to determine how, where, and when they can get COVID-19 vaccine. It of utmost importance that facilities have their information *up-to-date* on this system. It does not necessarily have to be updated daily, but the information must be accurate and updated when there are changes in your number of available doses, when you move to the next priority group, and/or if any of your instructions change for the general public.

It is important to schedule vaccine recipients ahead of time for your vaccination clinics.

- This important because it helps:
 - Determine interest in vaccine in your community.
 - Plan for how much vaccine you will need to thaw and/or reconstitute.
 - Helps assure you are vaccinating in the order of North Dakota's priority groups.
- If you need to fill a vaccine clinic or use remaining vaccine doses and cannot identify anybody within the current or next priority group, contact your local public health department, another clinic or area pharmacies to see if they have a list. Also consider searching for and reaching out to patients in your EHR that fit the criteria for the current priority group.
 - BUT, do not so rigidly hold to priority groups that vaccine is wasted. This is where planning ahead *is critical*. Be prepared to offer vaccine promptly to persons in a

lower priority group IF demand subsides in the current group OR doses are about to expire according to labeling instructions.

IMPORTANT TIP: Have a list of available patients (e.g. 10 extra individuals ready to come in to get vaccinated at a moment's notice) in case you have no-shows/extra doses from vials to use during your vaccination clinic.

During Your Vaccination Clinic

Do not reconstitute vaccine or draw up doses into syringes ahead of time.

- To minimize wastage, do not reconstitute vaccine vials until you are sure you will need them. Additionally, do not draw up doses into syringes until someone has presented for vaccination. Once vaccines are reconstituted and drawn up into syringes, the clock starts and they need to be used.

Report Doses Wasted/Expired

- If you do waste a dose of COVID-19 vaccine or a dose expires, report wastage and expiration in the [North Dakota Immunization Information System](#).
- Wasted or expired doses should be discarded according to your facility's policy.