

COVID-19 vaccine update for employees: Week of March 1

Please see the following COVID-19 vaccine updates.

Partnering to get shots in arms:

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continues to lead vaccine distribution across the state. For the Blacksburg campus and surrounding area, the New River Health District (NRHD) is managing the vaccine distribution, as are other local health districts where Virginia Tech has locations.

Virginia Tech is staying in close contact with the VDH and NRHD to understand the latest information available about vaccines and we are sharing information with employees as we learn it.

Please be aware, the NRHD is typically currently receiving a couple of thousand vaccine doses each week. Of that number, approximately half are distributed to people aged 65 and up and the other half are distributed to other people in the group 1b (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/#phase1b>) category.

Additionally, based on guidance from the CDC and VDH and because of limited supply, the NRHD as well as other Virginia health districts are further prioritizing (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/191/2021/01/Phase-1b-In-Depth.pdf>) within the group 1b “essential workers” category at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/#phase1b>. This is to ensure those with the most direct contact with the public receive the vaccine as soon as possible. Virginia Tech has no input into this additional prioritization, but we are partnering and supporting the NRHD and other health districts as they continue group 1b vaccinations.

Johnson & Johnson vaccine update:

The New River Health Department received 5,000 doses of Johnsons & Johnson vaccine this week and is partnering with local pharmacies to administer half of the vaccines to individuals eligible in group 1b, starting with those aged 65 and up.

The other half will be distributed to front-line essential workers in group 1b, including manufacturing and grocery stores at an event Monday at Radford University's Dedmon Center.

If individuals are able to receive one of these vaccines, they will be contacted directly by NRHD or a pharmacy. Please do not call the pharmacies

or show up at any vaccine sites without an appointment. The [NRVroadtowellness.com](https://www.nrvroadtowellness.com) website is updated with this information.

Now that there are three vaccines, all opportunities will mention which vaccine is available. Individuals can choose to wait for another vaccine without losing their place on the priority list. All of the approved vaccines are excellent. They are all safe and do an excellent job of preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

VDH vaccine pre-registration guidance:

Virginia Tech is continuing to work with the New River Health District (NRHD) and local health districts across the state to register group 1b employees for vaccines. It is also recommended that Virginia Tech employees across all locations register themselves through the statewide pre-registration system at <https://vax.preregister.virginia.gov/#/>.

Check vaccine pre-registration:

If you had previously pre-registered for the vaccine through your local health district you can check the statewide system at <https://vax.preregister.virginia.gov/#/search> for your information. If you are already registered, the prompt will say “user is registered.” If, for some reason, your information is not found, please complete the pre-registration form again; the system will send you a confirmation number once you submit the form. Individuals will maintain their current status (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/#phase1b>) of group 1a, 1b, 1c, or general population in the queue.

Vaccines for other Virginia Tech employees:

Group 1c includes other Virginia Tech faculty and staff as well as non-student wage, student wage, and graduate assistants who work for the university in some capacity, unless specifically excluded by the VDH. Virginia Tech will communicate information about group 1c vaccinations once we know more.

Following good health guidelines is still critical:

Whether someone has been fully vaccinated or not, it is still critical that everyone – employees and students alike – stay vigilant and adhere to the university and public health guidelines (<https://ready.vt.edu/public-health-guidelines.html>) to continue reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Remember the three Cs and the M:

- Avoid Close contact situations. Maintain distance from other people. Six feet doesn't mark a magic barrier, but the particles do dilute with distance.

- Avoid Crowds. Being in a large crowd will increase the chance that you will be around someone infected with the virus and that the virus will spread to others.
- Avoid Closed, poorly ventilated spaces. Imagine a cigarette smoker being in the same space as you. Will you take in any smoke?
- Wear Masks.

Current guidelines continue to state that even once an individual receives a vaccine, they should continue following these guidelines for the safety of our community until restrictions can be further relaxed or lifted.

Resources:

- VDH vaccine pre-registration system - <https://vax.preregister.virginia.gov/#/>
- NRV Road to Wellness site - <http://www.nrvroadtowellness.com/>
- Virginia Tech Ready site - <https://ready.vt.edu/>

Register for the James D. McComas Staff Leadership Virtual Seminar

Registration is now open for the 2021 James D. McComas Staff Leadership Seminar. The virtual seminar will be on Tuesday, March 30, from 10-11:30 a.m.

The annual seminar was established in 2004 to provide leadership training to staff members from all departments of the university. Our dynamic speaker will present a practical perspective, designed to serve as the foundation for self-development and is based on a simple yet revolutionary principle: *First learn to lead yourself, and then you will be in a solid position to effectively lead others.*

Register at https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9mHly8AHtXEtfsa. This event is sponsored by the university's Staff Senate and the Division of Human Resources. For more information, visit <https://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/mccomas.html>.

For registration questions, contact Becki Smith at rsmith6@vt.edu. For seminar questions, contact Jennifer Earley at jennife7@vt.edu.

Hokie Wellness (<https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/>) serves Virginia Tech to foster a healthier community by providing prevention services, education, outreach, and resources to employees at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/Employees.html> and students at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/students.html>. If you have questions, need assistance, or want to join the Hokie Wellness Google group to stay up to date with monthly updates, contact the team at hokiewellness@vt.edu.

Hokie Health: Taking care of yourself is key to mental health and wellness

The past year has held unique challenges for many, including new stressors at home, work, with financials, and more. The ability to bounce back from stress and adapt well in the face of adversity – also known as resiliency – has perhaps never been more important than it is now.

Resiliency is not a fixed trait that we are either born with or without. Instead, it is a set of skills that can be developed with practice. This means that no matter how you have navigated stressors in the past, there are many opportunities to develop healthy coping strategies and foster resiliency moving forward.

Self-care is an important part of building resiliency and has many research-backed benefits such as helping to prevent burnout, reducing relational conflict with others, and more. However, with self-care recently becoming such a buzzword, how do we know if our current self-care practices are genuinely effective and sustainable for us?

Hokie Wellness will hold a virtual self-care workshop for employees on Wednesday, March 17, from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Participants will learn how to assess their current coping skills, develop work-life balance, and create a realistic self-care plan.

Registration for the workshop is required and space is limited. Register: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/9201UwPQ8ZDui0n>

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please contact Swathi Prabhu at 540-231-3567 or email swathip@vt.edu during regular business hours at least 10 business days prior to the event.

Visit the Employee Wellness at Home site at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/hokie-wellness-at-home/employee-wellness-at-home.html> for more information on virtual workshops, connection sessions, and other wellness resources offered. Learn more about how we can be Better Together at Virginia Tech.

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