

CDC guidelines about vaccinations for people with underlying health conditions

According to the Hill newsmagazine of 12/26/20 , the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Saturday issued a new guidance stating that people with underlying health conditions can receive a coronavirus vaccine.

The guidance explains that “adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.”

Thus, the CDC added that those vaccines that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration “may be administered to people with underlying medical conditions provided they have not had a severe allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine.”

The CDC explained that people with weakened immune systems due to other illnesses or medication may also receive a COVID-19 vaccine, but they should be aware that limited safety data is available on the effects of the vaccines on these individuals.

Those who have experienced Guillain-Barré syndrome, a condition in which the body begins to attack parts of its own nervous system, may also receive the vaccine doses. The guidance adds that following vaccination during clinical trials, there have been no instances of the syndrome.

People who have previously experienced Bell’s palsy, a condition that causes muscle weakness in one side of the face, may also receive a vaccine. Some participants during clinical trials did develop Bell's palsy following vaccination, but it did not occur at a rate above that expected in the general population.

Despite the start of distribution of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, the CDC recommends that people who get vaccinated should continue to follow current coronavirus

health and safety protocols, such as wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and avoiding crowds.

According to the CDC, nearly 2 million people have received their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine as of Saturday. Both the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech and the one from Moderna require two doses to be administered several weeks apart.

Final trial data on both vaccines showed them to have a roughly 95 percent efficacy rate at preventing COVID-19, although Moderna's vaccine has an 86 percent efficacy rate for those over the age of 65. Health care workers have been prioritized in the initial distribution of the vaccine, and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted last week to advise the CDC to include those 75 and older and specific front-line essential workers, including emergency responders and teachers, in the next phase of coronavirus vaccinations.