

UW Health: Doctor explains vaccine implications for some high-risk groups

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MADISON – As additional groups are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in Wisconsin, more people with pre-existing health conditions or other health factors will become able to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

Currently, the list of eligible groups includes:

- Frontline health care personnel
- Residents in skilled nursing and long-term care facilities
- Police and fire personnel, correctional staff
- Adults ages 65 and older

These groups, and future groups that will become eligible, include individuals who are at increased risk for serious illness if they are infected, and vaccination will be especially important to protect them from COVID-19 infection.

A few examples of those who may have other considerations before receiving a COVID-19 vaccination include:

- Those who have an autoimmune disorder such as lupus
- Women who are pregnant or nursing
- People who have had a known allergic reaction to vaccines
- Individuals with a weakened immune system resulting from medical treatment or are living with a medical condition that weakens the immune system, such as cancer or organ transplant recipients.

It is important that people in high-risk groups who are currently eligible to receive a vaccine research online resources provided by their healthcare provider or state Department of Health Services before scheduling a COVID-19 vaccination, according to Dr. James Conway, a UW Health vaccine expert.

“The important thing to keep in mind for people with underlying medical conditions is that being in a high-risk group for developing severe COVID-19 infection means that the risk of SARS-CoV2 infection is far greater than any risks from reaction to vaccine,” he said.

It is also important to note that eligibility is not prioritized by health risk factor to COVID-19.

Conway will be available for interviews today, and a recorded interview with him is also available.