

Understanding your COVID-19 vaccine shipment

Cencora is fully committed to the security of the pharmaceutical supply chain. Maintaining the right temperature per manufacturer guidance throughout our supply chain is one way we ensure complete product integrity upon delivery.

As your partner in healthcare, we ask that you refer to the guidance below to ensure your product retains integrity.

Expiration dates vs. beyond-use dates (BUD)

All vaccine products, like other medications, have an expiration date. The expiration date is determined by the manufacturer. The expiration date is the final day that the vaccine can be administered.

The beyond-use date (BUD) is the last day that a vaccine can be safely used after it has been moved from one storage condition to another (e.g., frozen to refrigerated) or prepared for patient use. The BUD replaces the manufacturer’s expiration date but never extends it.

Important for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines

Based on manufacturer guidance and explicitly outlined in the package insert or Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers, Cencora receives the product at ultra-low temperature (-60°C to -90°C) and immediately transitions it to cold chain conditions (2°C and 8°C).

Upon receipt, the product must be stored in cold chain conditions (2°C and 8°C) and used by the beyond-use date (BUD) – which may be before the expiration date. This applies to the pediatrics presentations. Pfizer adult never frozen presentation must be kept between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) until the expiration date.

01 Cencora ships product

- Cencora ships products via our dedicated courier network or via next day air parcel to ensure timely delivery.
- Totes utilized by couriers and shipping systems used for partial shipments have been independently qualified to maintain temperature while in-transit.
- All shipments are delivered in pre-qualified containers to ensure temperature stability. Please be aware that gel packs may thaw over time and may not be frozen upon receipt.
- **For Moderna vaccines:** Product may arrive in a reusable Aerosafe brand container. Each shipment will arrive with a return label already on the container, a paper insert outlining the returns process, and “Return Shipment Required” printed on the outside of the container. Once you remove your product, keep this container for return upon your next UPS pickup. If you do not have an existing pickup scheduled, one will be arranged for you by Aerosafe upon delivery.

02 Handling product upon delivery

- Product may arrive in totes via our courier drivers with other items or via separate FedEx or UPS packaging.
- **For FedEx or UPS packages:** Do not use the shipping date printed directly on the label as an indication of in-transit time. Upon arrival at your location, reference your package’s shipping label to identify the carrier before utilizing the tracking number printed on the label to verify the time your product spent in-transit. If product was not received within one day of departing Cencora’s distribution center, please contact Cencora immediately.
- Once you have verified the integrity of your product, please ensure that product is either used or properly stored within 24-hours of the shipping time.

Storage guidelines

Vaccine manufacturer	Storage upon delivery	Additional storage options
Moderna (Spikevax)	Between -50°C and -15°C (-58°F and 5°F) until the expiration date.	Between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) for up to 30 days.
Pfizer-BioNTech Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech Never Frozen (Comirnaty)	Between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) for up to 10 weeks based on the BUD indicator. Between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) until the expiration date.	

Questions?

If you have any concerns regarding the integrity of your product or would like to request a return, contact seasonalvaccines@amerisourcebergen.com or your Cencora representative.