

Monroe County Department of Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Handling

The COVID-19 vaccines are fragile and must be handled with care. The Emergency Use Authorizations and CDC have guidelines for handling the vaccine, these are summarized below.

Vaccine	Information	Reference
Pfizer-BioNTech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before dilution invert vaccine vial gently 10 times. • Do not shake. 	EUA for Healthcare Providers. Revised 6 April 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While preparing Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, I shook the vial instead of gently inverting 10 times. What should I do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discard the vaccine. mRNA vaccine is very fragile and should not be shaken. Vials should only be gently inverted. 	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/pfizer-bioNTech-faqs.html#storage
Moderna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swirl vial gently after thawing and between each withdrawal. Do not shake. • If transport at -50° to -15°C (-58° to 5°F) is not feasible, available data support transportation of one or more thawed vials for up to 12 hours at 2° to 8°C (35° to 46°F) when shipped using shipping containers which have been qualified to maintain 2° to 8°C (35° to 46°F) and under routine road and air transport conditions with shaking and vibration minimized. 	EUA for Healthcare Providers. Revised 31 March 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of my providers shook the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine vials before reading instructions for vaccine preparation. What should we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the manufacturer. mRNA vaccine is very fragile and should not be shaken. Vials should only be gently swirled while held upright. 	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/moderna/moderna-faqs.html
Janssen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before withdrawing each dose of vaccine, carefully mix the contents of the multi-dose vial by swirling gently in an upright position for 10 seconds. Do not shake. 	EUA for Healthcare Providers. Revised 27 February 2021.

DO NOT FLICK

While there is no direct specification regarding flicking, the guidelines for gentle handling and statements of “no shaking” have been interpreted to include no flicking.

Additionally, the CDC states to remove air bubbles while the needle is still in the vial. If the syringe is flicked while the needle is in the vial, the vaccine is abruptly moved, possibly inactivating the vaccine.

To maintain vaccine viability, DO NOT FLICK THE SYRINGES. Bubbles can be gently removed with gentle plunger movement.