

Pentagon poised to require COVID vaccinations for all military personnel

Members of the U.S. military will be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine beginning next month under a plan laid out by the Pentagon [August 9] and endorsed by President Joe Biden. In memos distributed to all troops, top Pentagon leaders said the vaccine is a necessary step to maintain military readiness.

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[Defense Secretary Lloyd] Austin's decision reflects similar moves by governments and companies around the world, as nations struggle with the highly contagious delta variant that has sent new U.S. cases, hospitalizations and deaths surging to heights not seen since last winter.

The concerns are especially acute in the military, where service members live and work closely together in barracks and on ships, increasing the risks of rapid spreading. Any large virus outbreak in the military could affect America's ability to defend itself in any security crisis.

Austin warned that if infection rates rise and potentially affect military readiness, "I will not hesitate to act sooner or recommend a different course to the President if I feel the need to do so. To defend this Nation, we need a healthy and ready force."

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