

## COVID 19 VACCINE FAQ'S

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### Which vaccine is being given?

So far, the state is sending us Moderna, which does not require ultra-cold storage and is easier to transport and store for rural destinations.

### How many doses are required?

2 doses, 28 days apart are required to achieve immunity to Covid. You will get a card when you get the first vaccine with the date of when the second vaccine is due. The CDC has held in reserve enough vaccine to guarantee a second vaccine is available. Optimal immunity is achieved two weeks after the second vaccine is received.

### Should people with history of allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) get Covid vaccine?

The only contra-indication to Covid vaccine is an allergic reaction to Covid vaccine or its components; this realistically means no one has a true contra-indication unless they experience a reaction to the first vaccine.

CDC advises that people who have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a vaccine or a medication that was injected into the body (by a shot under the skin, a shot into muscle, or given into a blood vessel through an

IV) proceed with caution, meaning they are observed for 30 minutes after the vaccine is given, or they delay getting vaccine until more experience is gathered. Every person needs to weigh their risk of getting ill or dying from Covid against the risk of allergic reaction. If you have questions about this, discuss with your medical provider over the phone.

People with a history of food, insect, or other environmental allergy which requires an “Epi-pen” can receive vaccine but should be monitored for 30 minutes.

What is a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)?

- Throat closing, high-pitched noise of breathing, wheezing, or definite shortness of breath.
- Nausea or vomiting or diarrhea or abdominal pain
- Sudden dizziness, fainting, heart racing, low blood pressure
- Swelling of lips, face, tongue or throat.
- Hives over the body, itching over the body.

Are severe allergic reactions common with Covid vaccine?

- There were no severe allergic reactions in the 15,000 people who were in the Phase 3 trials for Moderna.
- Of the 2 million plus vaccines given so far in the US less than 10 severe reactions have been reported (as opposed to > 300,000 deaths from Covid!!).

## What are possible side effects with Covid vaccine?

- Don't confuse a side effect with an allergic reaction (see above!)
- Pain in the arm where vaccine is given is very common, most people have arm pain, much like a flu vaccine. ( A few days of a sore arm beats getting Covid!). Redness or swelling at the injection site is also common.
- Swollen lymph nodes under the arm are common, it means your immune system is working!
- Feeling tired, achy, or having sore muscles, or low-grade headache are also frequent side effects. They will go away. (again, a little discomfort trumps getting Covid!)
- No severe side effects such as unusual neurological reactions occurred in the trials.
- Bottom line: some minor discomfort for a few days is common but you are trying to decrease the risk of getting an infection which could be fatal, or fatal to the person you give it to).

## What is being done to ensure vaccine is given safely?

- Most people will be observed for 15 minutes after vaccine by EMTs who have all medication, supplies, and a near-by ambulance to handle allergic reactions.

- Those with a history of allergic reaction to medication, vaccine, or environmental elements like food or insects, will be monitored for 30 minutes by EMTs.

### What is the age range for Moderna vaccine?

- 18 years of age and older

### What if I have had Covid infection?

- Vaccine can be given as long as the Isolation period is over. (don't take vaccine if active infection)
- Immunity to re-infection is believed to last about 90 days so people who have recently had Covid could decide to wait those 90 days, but it is not necessary.

### What if I received passive antibodies in the hospital as treatment for Covid (convalescent plasma)?

- Wait 90 days after the antibody treatment was given so as to not possibly interfere with the body's ability to respond to vaccine.

### What if I am in quarantine due to exposure to Covid?

- Do not take vaccine until your quarantine time is done and you are sure you do not have Covid (can get a test 6-7 days after last exposure to infected person).

### Can I mix vaccine?

- Both of the vaccines you receive should be the same brand of vaccine. Eg, if you receive Moderna for the first, take ONLY Moderna for the second.

### What about underlying conditions or meds which affect the immune system?

- Immuno-compromised individuals are at increased risk of severe illness and death from Covid infection.
- These people can take vaccine but the amount of information about the effectiveness of the vaccine is not yet as well understood.
- It comes down to an individual's personal risks of getting very ill from Covid versus what is still unknown about how well the vaccine works.

### What about those with auto-immune diseases (like rheumatoid arthritis, or lupus)?

- People with auto-immune diseases were in the trials and no differences were seen in these people, compared to those without auto-immune disease.
- There is no reason to withhold vaccine from this group unless an allergic reaction to Covid vaccine occurs.

### What about pregnancy and breast-feeding?

- There is no live or killed virus in the Covid vaccines. So it is not possible to “get” Covid from the vaccine.

- Pregnant women were not included in the clinical trials of Covid but the CDC does not consider pregnancy a contra-indication. Those with increased risk of catching Covid (eg those in healthcare working with Covid patients) may especially want to consider taking the vaccine.
- Pregnant women have a higher risk of getting severely ill or dying from Covid, another reason to consider getting the vaccine
- There is no reason to delay getting vaccinated if future pregnancy is planned, in fact avoiding Covid in pregnancy would be the safest decision.
- Covid vaccines are not thought to be a risk to breast-feeding infants.

### When do I get the vaccination?

- Thus far we are receiving only small shipments of vaccine.
- We are following government guidelines on how to prioritize giving vaccine. Generally, health care workers and elders in facilities are the first recipients. First responders, front-line workers, and elders are the next group, followed by those with underlying health conditions. Healthy young adults will likely not receive vaccine for a few months.
- Prioritizing and administering vaccine will be a changing situation, dependent on how much vaccine we get and how often we receive it. We will use

public service announcements, communication with employers and supervisors, and other tools to inform the public when vaccine is available.

- We will consider “mass vaccine” events but not unless they can be done in a controlled, safe manner with appropriate space to ensure close observation after the vaccine.

For more in-depth information about Covid vaccines, go the website for the CDC and look under guidelines:

- Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA Covid-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States
- Interim Considerations: Preparing for the Potential Management of Anaphylaxis at Covid-19 Vaccination Sites.
- Evidence Table for Covid-19 Vaccines Allocation in Phase 1b and 1c of the Vaccination Program.