



COVID-19 VACCINE

WHEN WILL A COVID-19 VACCINE BE AVAILABLE?

- Progress has been made on several new vaccines to prevent COVID-19. Safe and effective vaccines are on their way, but the supply will be small at first. We must continue to wear masks, socially distance, wash our hands frequently and stay home if we are sick to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)'s plan to distribute vaccines is designed to reduce serious illness and death, ensure fair and equitable distribution and access in all communities. MDH and local public health will share vaccine distribution information as soon as details are available.
- The first doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be given to people working in health care settings who could get COVID-19 at work and people who live and work in long-term care facilities like nursing homes. Other groups that will likely get some of the early doses include emergency first responders, essential workers, adults with high-risk medical conditions, and older adults 65+ years of age.
- People in these first waves will be told by their employer or the facility where they live if they are able to get the vaccine and when and how. MDH will continue to communicate about vaccine doses and availability as they know more about the future phases.
- Eventually, all Minnesotans who want to be vaccinated will be able to do so. It just won't be right away for everyone. No one will be required to get the vaccine by the government or public health.

HOW DOES THE VACCINE WORK?

- The first vaccines that have been developed do not contain any live or dead COVID-19 virus. They contain material that teach our immune system to recognize the COVID-19 virus and destroy it before it can infect you.

HOW SAFE AND EFFECTIVE IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

- The first vaccines have been developed by two manufacturers in the US: Moderna and Pfizer. They have been tested and found to prevent COVID-19 in 95 percent of the people given the vaccine, a very high rate of effectiveness. These two vaccines and others that are being developed must all meet existing strict safety standards.



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- All the usual steps have been taken to make sure COVID-19 vaccines are safe. The number of people in the COVID-19 vaccine trials is the same as for other vaccines and include people from diverse backgrounds. There has been no change in those safety standards to make sure the COVID-19 vaccine is safe, pure and effective.
- To speed things up, drug manufacturers have used thirty years of research, plus new and faster methods to develop the vaccines. Companies have been able to start making the vaccine faster because the federal government is paying the cost.

HOW CAN I GET VACCINATED?

- The COVID-19 vaccine will be free of charge. Eventually, it will be available from health care providers, vaccine clinics operated by Public Health departments and Community Health Centers and at pharmacies.
- The first COVID-19 vaccines available will be a series of 2 doses. It will require one shot, and then you'll need to come back three or four weeks later for a second shot. It is very important to get both shots to be fully protected.

More details about the vaccine will be available in the coming weeks. Be aware that not everything you see or hear about the vaccine on social media or the internet will be true. Use information from trusted medical sources, health professionals and government agencies that rely on science and facts:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH):
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine
- Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health:
www.ramseycounty.us/COVIDvaccine

Visit ramseycounty.us/coronavirus for the latest information on COVID-19, including updates on future vaccine clinics in the county, information on prevention and testing, and COVID-19 assistance programs.

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