

December 16, 2020



Dear Residents, Resident's Loved Ones and Staff:

I am pleased to share exciting news that Friends Care Community (FCC), residents and staff will have the COVID-19 vaccine available to us in December (still no exact schedule as of yet). We are blessed to be part of this first phase of vaccines in the United States, which includes health care staff and people who are most at-risk, such as:

- Health care staff in hospitals, long-term care facilities, home health, and emergency services;
- Residents in skilled nursing and assisted living.

Together, with Medical Director Dr. Daniel Swagerty, FCC encourages each resident and staff member to receive the vaccine. It is the best way to keep yourself from becoming ill from COVID-19, to protect our residents, to help protect your own family, and to help stop the pandemic.

Over the next several months, more vaccines will be available to the general community. The studies are showing that the vaccine works in more than 94% of people who received the vaccine in the trials. We are finishing details and schedules for the vaccine clinic, and we expect to begin vaccinating staff and residents near the week of December 21. The clinic will make the vaccine available to all FCC residents (only Nursing Home and Assisted Living Residents), as well as all of FCC staff members and those who provide contract services to our residents, (i.e. Therapy and Housekeeping personnel).

**How will you receive the vaccine?** FCC is working with CVS Pharmacies to give us our vaccines on-site. Each person will have a two-step vaccine: individuals will receive the first vaccine, then the booster approximately 2-3 weeks later.

**Can we believe that a COVID-19 immunization will work?** Medical professionals are saying that these vaccines will clearly prevent life-threatening complications or death from COVID-19. We already know that other vaccines have wiped out other extreme viruses, like smallpox and polio. And we know that the influenza vaccine is also very effective. The trials of the new COVID-19 vaccine have been

very, very successful, and this tells us that we should be very excited about using the vaccines to stop the pandemic.

**What if I already had COVID-19?** Medical professionals still strongly encourage you to get the vaccine even if you already had the virus. Your infection may offer some natural immunity, but no one knows how long that natural protection lasts or what risks you have if you get it again.

**Is it safe to receive the vaccine?** This is an important question on all our minds right now. We believe in the safety of the vaccine. So far, studies have monitored almost 50,000 people over several months after the vaccination. During these studies, doctors and researchers have not seen anyone with dangerous side effects. With any vaccine, you might expect very slight side effects such as mild fatigue, soreness at the shot site, or a headache – all very normal. Here is something else that might interest you: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess the safety of a vaccine. The COVID-19 trials have almost 50,000 participants, with no adverse (i.e. harmful) side effects. ***This suggests that the vaccine is safe and far outweighs the danger of a COVID-19 infection, especially for anyone at high risk.***

The COVID-19 vaccine will not give you COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine is not made with the live virus. This vaccine is made with proteins that force your body to have an immune response so that your body recognizes and fights the actual virus when you are exposed to it. ***By taking the vaccine you are protecting not only yourself but you are helping to protect others.***

A Consent Form will be need to be completed before you can get the vaccine. One will be available to you as soon as we have a date when CVS Pharmacy will be conducting the vaccinations for us. Once we have a date for FCC to receive the vaccination, you will be informed right away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike J. Montgomery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Montgomery, NHA  
Executive Director

## Frequently Asked Questions

You may wish to visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/) for ongoing updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

### **Why are pharmacies providing the clinics for vaccines instead of FCC?**

Pharmacies have been providing vaccines for about 10 years, since the H1N1 flu. The pharmacy partnership is important because they are already prepared with everything needed for the vaccine. They will also do all the data reporting needed, ensure that our residents and staff will not need to get extra supplies, and take time for extra training of staff if needed. The pharmacy will come to our location with all that is needed.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine give me COVID-19?**

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 (information directly from the CDC).

### **How long does it take for the vaccine to work?**

It usually takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after receiving your vaccine. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection (information directly from the CDC).

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine make me test positive on a COVID-19 test?**

Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. This is because antibody tests show you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-

19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results (information directly from the CDC).

**Should I get the vaccine if I have already been sick with COVID-19?**

Yes. There are severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, so people are generally advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity you get from having an infection is called natural immunity, and it varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long (information directly from the CDC).

**How long will the vaccine give me immunity from COVID-19?**

We won't know how long the vaccine will give you immunity. We won't know until we have more data on how well it works. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important parts of COVID-19 studies that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new data becomes available (information directly from the CDC).

**Will getting vaccinated help prevent me from getting sick with COVID-19?**

Yes. While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. Learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/) (information directly from the CDC).

**Will receiving this vaccine (mRNA), alter my DNA?**

No! mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid –we describe mRNA as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way.

Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease (information directly from the CDC).

### **How is a vaccine developed and tested?**

Approval of a vaccine for use in people involves multiple phases with different goals for assessing effectiveness and safety in different populations. There are a total of 4 phases and the vaccine must meet very intense safety criteria before completing each phase. Once a vaccine is approved for use after phase 3, it has been tested in tens of thousands of people and if no significant harmful side effects are noted, it is considered safe for use. Phase 4 involves continued monitoring and gathering of safety data. This type of clinical trial has been used for decades to approve medications and vaccines (information directly from the CDC).

**Will I be able to stop wearing PPE if I am vaccinated?** FCC will follow the recommendations that we keep wearing a mask and appropriate PPE, physical distancing, and practicing hand washing until we know more results.

### **How will we know the vaccine safe?**

Safety is the most important requirement for vaccines, and it is assessed in trials by independent experts. FDA advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess safety. The current phase 3 trials had more than that minimum – they have had 30,000 to 50,000 participants. This really demonstrates how safety is a top priority for the FDA and the medical community. There are 2 advisory committees for the COVID-19 vaccine: (1) The Vaccine and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) that advises the FDA; (2) The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that advises the CDC. These advisory boards are independent. Their job is to monitor vaccines to ensure safety. They do this job regardless of money, politics, etc. The people on these committees are experts from academic institutions, and they are vetted to avoid a conflict of interest. Experts who may have a conflict of interest do not participate on these committees. The committees evaluate the vaccine data for safety and efficacy, and also help to determine how it will be distributed (information directly from the CDC).

**What are some of the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? Will the vaccine make me sick?** The vaccines tested in clinical trials can cause short-term mild discomfort (such as headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever, and pain at injection site) in a percentage of the people who receive them. This is the effect of your body developing immunity. Clinical trial participants reported that the discomfort went away after a day, sometimes sooner. When you receive the second dose of the vaccine, the discomfort can be more pronounced. This is a normal reaction, so be prepared. If you experience discomfort after the first dose of the vaccine, it is very important that you still receive the second dose a few weeks later for the vaccine to be effective. This does not mean that the vaccine has given you COVID-19. Rather, this means that the vaccine is causing your body's immune system to react and create antibodies to fight off the virus. In other words, if you feel some discomfort, then the vaccine is doing its job (information directly from the CDC).

**Should I receive the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

Please check with your physician for additional guidance (information directly from the CDC).

# Frequently Asked Questions



SPREAD THE TRUTH

## COVID-19 VACCINE



### WHAT IS OPERATION WARP SPEED?

Operation Warp Speed is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense to help develop, produce, and distribute millions of vaccine doses for COVID-19 as quickly as possible while ensuring that vaccines are safe and effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is focused on vaccine planning, working closely with the Ohio Department of Health and other state partners to prepare for vaccination availability.



### WHY IS A COVID-19 VACCINE NEEDED IF SOCIAL DISTANCING AND WEARING MASKS PREVENT COVID-19 VIRUS FROM SPREADING?

Getting us through the pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines boost your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like masks and social distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to or spreading the virus. Together, the coming COVID-19 vaccines and proper prevention measures will offer the best protection from COVID-19.



### HOW MANY DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE WILL BE NEEDED?

The two vaccines that have applied for emergency use authorization each require two doses. There is a vaccine in development and Phase 3 clinical trials that uses one dose. Ohioans who receive a dose of a particular vaccine must receive a second dose of the vaccine from the same manufacturer. For example, if you receive a first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, your second dose must be the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. If you receive a first dose of the Moderna vaccine, your second dose must be the Moderna vaccine.



### IF I ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED WITH THE COVID-19 VACCINE WHEN IT IS AVAILABLE

Not enough is known about how long natural immunity lasts for those that have recovered from the virus. Until we have a vaccine available and know more about natural immunity to COVID-19, the CDC will not comment on whether people who had COVID-19 should get a COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will make recommendations to CDC on who should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

**COVID**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE **19**

  
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Hospital Association  
The Link to Quality Care





## HOW WILL I KNOW THAT THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS SAFE?

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine(s) available. Clinical trials study the effectiveness of the vaccine in thousands of study participants. Data from these trials will be provided to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine vaccine safety and effectiveness. The FDA uses rigorous standards during the evaluation and if it determines that a vaccine meets its safety and effectiveness requirements, it can make these available by approval or emergency use authorization. After FDA makes its determination, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will review available data before making final vaccine recommendations to the CDC. There have been no shortcuts in the vaccine development process. The COVID-19 vaccine development process involved several steps comparable with those used to develop other vaccines, such as the flu or measles vaccine.



## ARE THERE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS ON WHO WILL RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE FIRST IN OHIO?

At first, there will be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. The federal government will work to get those first vaccine doses out once a vaccine is authorized, approved, and recommended, rather than waiting until there are enough vaccines for everyone. However, it is important that the initial vaccines are given to people in a fair, ethical, and transparent way. **Those who are at highest risk of contracting and transmitting the virus will be among the first to be able to access vaccination.**



## CAN OTHER VACCINES HELP PREVENT ME FROM GETTING COVID-19?

Other vaccines, such as those for flu, measles, or other diseases, will not protect you from COVID-19. Only the vaccines designed specifically to protect you from COVID-19, once approved for use by the FDA, can prevent COVID-19. While a flu vaccine will not prevent you from getting COVID-19, it can prevent you from getting influenza (flu) at the same time as COVID-19. Because the flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading during this time, getting a flu vaccine will be more crucial than ever.



## WHO CAN GET THE VACCINE FIRST IN OHIO?

Initially, there will be a limited number of vaccines available, and Ohio is committed to making it widely available, for those that want to receive it, as quickly as possible as shipments of vaccine arrive. In conjunction with the recommendations of medical experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), Ohio has identified who will be among the first to receive those very early shipments in Phase 1A, should they choose to be vaccinated, listed below.

- **Healthcare providers and personnel who are routinely involved with the care of COVID-19 patients.**
- **Residents and staff at nursing facilities.**
- **Residents and staff at assisted living facilities.**
- **Patients and staff at psychiatric hospitals.**
- **People with intellectual disabilities and those with mental illness who are in group homes or centers and staff at those locations**
- **Residents and staff of Ohio's veterans homes.**
- **EMS responders.**



## WHEN WILL THE OTHER DISTRIBUTION PHASES BEGIN?

Vaccine manufacturers are working hard to manufacture and distribute vaccines safely, quickly, and effectively. Each state will be informed, on a weekly basis, of how many vaccine doses they will receive that week. As vaccine supply increases, Ohio will be able to continue to vaccinate Ohioans who choose to receive the vaccine. The speed at which Ohio will move through the phases is largely dependent upon the number of vaccines available.

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[CORONAVIRUS.OHIO.GOV](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)

**CALL 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).**