



Community Health Ambassadors

Fielding common questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine

Updated January 19, 2021

Use this guide for talking points for common questions from community members.

Vaccine Development

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

COVID-19 vaccines are tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines passed three phases of clinical trials. These phases included months of data collection and thousands of participants. All routine safety standards must be met to ensure that any authorized or approved vaccine is as safe as possible.

Pfizer/BioNTech
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 43,931 enrolled• 150 clinical sites• 39 U.S. states

Moderna
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30,000 enrolled• 89 clinical sites• 32 U.S. states

Was the COVID-19 vaccine developed too quickly to be safe?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine was able to be developed so quickly because it did not face the typical barriers that usually slow things down. These barriers include securing funding, identifying the structure of the virus, recruiting participants for the trials, developing the vaccine technology (mRNA vaccines have already been widely used), delays in manufacturing, and waiting for FDA review and authorization. The COVID-19 vaccine development had great levels of resources, scientists, and participants. Scientists and researchers across the world also collaborated and shared information and resources to make this possible.

Has the COVID-19 vaccine been tested in diverse populations?

Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, ethnicities, and different medical conditions. There were no significant safety concerns identified in these groups.

Pfizer/BioNTech
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Racial/ethnic distribution<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13% - Hispanic• 10% - African American• 6% - Asian• 1% - Native American• 45% ages 56-85

Moderna
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Racial/ethnic distribution<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 63% - White• 20% - Hispanic• 10% - African American/Black• 4% - Asian• 3% - All others• 64% ages 45 and older<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 39% ages 45-64• 25% ages 65+



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Vaccination vs. Natural Immunity

Isn't it better to get natural immunity rather than immunity from vaccines?

Both COVID-19 and the vaccine are new. We don't know how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused serious illness and death in many people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get sick. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine helps protect you and those you love.

Do I need to get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

Yes. Right now it's unclear how long immunity for COVID-19 lasts after you have been sick. We do know that immunity from having the virus decreases over time, especially for mild cases. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from getting COVID-19 again.

Why do I need to get two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?

It is important to get both doses for the maximum level of immunity to COVID-19. Having one dose gives you about 50% immunity, and having two doses gives you about 95% immunity.

Getting Vaccinated

Will the COVID-19 vaccine make me sick? What are the side effects?

You may experience some mild side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The side effects are signs that your immune system is building protection against the virus. These include:

- Soreness, redness, or warmth in the arm where you were vaccinated.
- Headache
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Body Aches

These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Most people do not have serious side effects after getting a vaccine.

People who should not get the vaccine include people that have allergies to the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine and those that have had an allergic reaction to the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.



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How do I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Register for the COVID-19 vaccine on Lake County's AllVax Portal. You will be notified when you are able to schedule an appointment for a vaccine. AllVax is a safe and secure system that will help you schedule a vaccination appointment, track the type of vaccine you receive, and provide other important information. Visit allvax.lakecohealth.org to get started. If you need help registering, please visit the [AllVax FAQ page on Registration](#). I can also help walk you through the [registration process](#). If you need have additional questions you can call the Lake County Health Department at 847-377-8130.

When can I get the vaccine?

Once you register in AllVax, you will receive an email when it's your turn to schedule your vaccine. Right now, we are vaccinating those in Phase 1A, which includes those who work in healthcare settings and long-term care facility residents. The next phase will include seniors 65 or older as well as frontline essential workers, including first responders, teachers, support staff, transportation staff, food/agriculture staff, daycare facilities, grocery stores, and corrections officers.

The best way to know when it is your turn is to register on the AllVax Portal. Once you register, add allvax@communications-lakecohealth.org to your safe senders list to ensure future messages do not go to spam.

Why are only certain conditions listed in the AllVax system?

The list of high-risk conditions on the AllVax Portal is based on CDC recommendations. Studies have found that those with the listed conditions are at the highest risk for severe illness. New health conditions may get added. If they do, we will send an email to registered residents. They can then update their health conditions in the portal.

What brand will I get?

The vaccine you receive is based on CDC guidance and availability. You cannot make a request for a specific type of vaccine. You do need to make sure you get the same vaccine for both doses—they are not interchangeable. AllVax will help track which vaccine you get so you receive the right second dose. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines and work in the same way. They have similar safety and efficacy results from clinical trials.



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I registered in AllVax and haven't received my email yet to schedule an appointment.
When will I get an email?

Three things have to happen for a person to receive an email from AllVax to set up their appointment:

1. The registered person must be currently eligible to get the vaccine (they meet the requirements of the current phase of vaccinations);
2. The Health Department receives a supply of vaccine; and
3. Appointment times are available.

The AllVax system does not email everyone who is eligible at the same time. This is to avoid the frustrating situation where you might get an email to schedule, log in, and all appointments are already taken. For example, there might be 30,000 people currently eligible, but the Health Department receives a shipment of 1,200 doses. The AllVax system may notify the next 1,500 people who are eligible to allow them to schedule, and then notify more people if appointments do not fill up.

Can an exception be made so that I (or my family member) can get vaccinated sooner?

No. We understand that many people are eager to get the COVID-19 vaccine and are concerned for their own health and the health of their loved ones. We are following the guidelines set in place by the CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health. We are not making exceptions to the vaccination phases. Be assured, everyone who wants a vaccine will be able to get one, but this process will take time.

Remember that while we wait for the vaccine, we still have the power to protect ourselves and our families from COVID-19. Consistently follow the 3 Ws – Wear a mask, Wash your hands, and Watch your distance – to keep yourself and those you love safe.

Why can't I receive my vaccine yet?

Our vaccine supply is very limited. We expect supply to increase over the coming weeks and months, so our Health Department is working to build a network of local providers to give vaccinations. As supply increases and more providers are set up to administer vaccines, the number of people getting vaccinated will increase.