GENERAL PUBLIC COVID-19 VACCINE TALKING POINTS

How is the vaccine being distributed right now?

- According to federal, state and public health guidelines, health care workers with the highest risk of exposure were identified as the first tier to receive the vaccine.
- We started vaccinating UnityPoint Health team members in December 2020 and continue to make progress based on available number of vaccine doses.
- The next tier will include additional essential workers and higher risk patients. Distribution will depend on the number of available vaccine doses and progress will vary by county due to a variety of factors. If you identify as a member of one of these groups, please know we’re working quickly to determine eligibility, timelines and processes. We appreciate your patience.
- We expect COVID-19 vaccines to be widely available to the general public later in 2021. Eligibility, timelines and processes will depend on the number of available vaccine doses.

How will I be notified when I can receive the vaccine?

- As soon as we have more information to proceed, we will partner with public health to contact people who are eligible for the vaccine regarding next steps.
- Please note that community members aren’t able to sign up for the vaccine in advance at this time.

Additional Information & Guidance

- If you have questions about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, visit our website to review Frequently Asked Questions (https://uph.link/zjc) as well as check out the Pfizer (https://uph.link/l7m) and Moderna (https://uph.link/i4y) Vaccine Fact Sheets from the FDA.
- Continue to wear a face covering, social distance and wash your hands frequently in order to help reduce your risk of COVID-19.
- Learn about the COVID-19 vaccine from fact-based sources, such as the FDA (https://uph.link/u06) and CDC (https://uph.link/h3y).
- Contact your health care provider if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

What are some of the potential side effects?

- For more information on vaccine safety, speed of development and potential side effects of vaccination, we recommend reading the Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet (https://uph.link/l7m) and Moderna EUA Fact Sheet (https://uph.link/i4y).

What are the ingredients in the COVID vaccine?

- Ingredients for the Pfizer COVID Vaccine may be found on the EUA Fact Sheet (https://uph.link/l7m).
- Ingredients for the Moderna Vaccine can be found on the EUA Fact Sheet (https://uph.link/i4y).

How do I know this vaccine is safe, since it was just developed? How can I trust the approval process?

- We want our community to know our clinical leaders and experts at UnityPoint Health have thoroughly reviewed all the data surrounding the clinical trials of these vaccines.
- In order to receive Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA, the vaccine must be proven safe and effective.
The science is rooted in years of research, and every step of the vaccine process went through the same safety assessments as all other vaccines.

- For more information on vaccine safety, speed of development and potential side effects of vaccination, we recommend visiting the CDC website (https://uph.link/h3y).

**Should someone with allergies get this vaccine?**

- If you have had a serious allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to any previous vaccine or injectable therapy or have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient of the vaccine, you should talk to your healthcare provider before considering the COVID vaccine.

**Does the second dose have to be exactly 21 days (Pfizer) or 28 days (Moderna) after the first dose?**

- Both vaccines available under the FDA EUA (emergency use authorization) are 2 dose vaccines with the second dose for the Pfizer vaccine at 21 days and Moderna vaccine at 28 days.
- These are the intervals utilized in the vaccine studies, so it is optimal to remain consistent.
- The CDC has stated that if the second vaccine is given late, the series does not need to be restarted.
- The second dose should be the same brand as the initial dose as there is not data to support interchanging brands.

**If I have already tested positive for COVID, can I get the vaccine?**

- Yes, but per CDC guidance, we are recommending a voluntary deferral until approximately 90 days following diagnosis. This is to facilitate vaccination of those still susceptible to infection, as current evidence shows that risk for reinfection within 90 days is very low.

**Can pregnant or nursing individuals receive the vaccine?**

- Yes, pregnant and nursing individuals are eligible to receive the vaccine. They were excluded from the clinical trials in the development of this vaccine, so no information has been collected regarding its safety during pregnancy. However, our Women’s Service Line supports the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in the position the vaccine should be offered to pregnant and lactating individuals.
- It is important to know that being pregnant puts a woman at increased risk of more severe COVID-19 with an increase in ICU admission and ventilator use when compared to non-pregnant women in the same age group. The bottom line – it’s a personal decision, so we recommend pregnant individuals contact their provider to discuss their individual situation.