



## COVID-19 Vaccine Talking Points and FAQ

### GENERAL

- The first shipments of COVID-19 vaccine have been delivered in Texas. Four sites received 19,500 doses of the Pfizer vaccine Dec. 14. An additional 19 sites will receive 75,075 doses on Dec. 15.
- Texas was allocated 224,250 doses of vaccine to be shipped to 110 providers across the state in Week 1 (Dec. 14-18) of distribution. The focus is on facilities that indicated they will vaccinate at least 975 front-line health care workers - the minimum order for the Pfizer vaccine. More vaccine will be available for more providers the second week and beyond.

### AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH

- Austin Public Health, the area hospital systems, and community partners have established a coalition to plan for COVID-19 vaccine distribution within Austin and Travis County. The coalition is developing strategies to reach the desired level of COVID-19 vaccination coverage through a phased approach.

### GETTING VACCINATED

- The first several rounds of doses will be allocated to frontline health care workers, then healthcare workers, followed by essential workers. As the vaccine availability expands, people who are at greater risk to suffer severe symptoms of COVID-19 will be vaccinated - older adults and those with underlying health conditions. Texas' COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Guiding Principles and Health Care Workers Definition, developed by Texas Department of State Health Services and followed by all providers in Austin-Travis County, can be found here - [LINK](#).
- As vaccine availability increases in 2021, vaccines will be available at doctor's offices, pharmacies, hospitals and other "usual" sites. Contact your regular provider of vaccines to see whether they will be a provider of the COVID-19 vaccine.

### SAFETY

- The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are thoroughly tested and safe as possible for everyone. Federal partners are working together to ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines through clinical trials, vaccine safety monitoring, and expanding safety monitoring systems.



- All approved COVID-19 vaccines go through extensive testing before they are authorized for distribution by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). They are about 94% effective for all recipients.
- Two doses of the currently available Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are necessary to be effective. A second shot three weeks after your first shot is needed to be protected against this serious disease.
- Tell the vaccination provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:
  - Have any allergies
  - Have a fever
  - Have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner
  - Are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
  - Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
  - Are breastfeeding
  - Have received another COVID-19 vaccine

## **BENEFITS**

- By getting the vaccine, you are less likely to get COVID-19, and are better prepared to fight the illness if you are exposed.
- The best way to protect yourself and your family and stop the pandemic is to use every tool available. Do not rely on the expectation of a vaccine to protect you. Continue wearing masks, washing hands, and avoiding close contact with others. This is especially critical at Christmas and at New Year's celebrations.
- None of the vaccines include the live virus that causes COVID-19 so they cannot give you COVID-19. All vaccinations come with some risk of side effects. Sometimes after vaccination you may experience mild symptoms like pain at the injection site, fever, chills, mild fatigue or a headache. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity and they go away quickly. If more serious symptoms occur, you should contact your doctor immediately.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

- **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**
  - *The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. All approved COVID-19 vaccines went through extensive testing and clinical trials before they were approved for distribution.*
- **Can the COVID-19 vaccine give you COVID-19?**



- *The vaccines do not include the live virus that causes COVID-19 so the vaccine cannot give you COVID-19. Sometimes after vaccination you may experience mild symptoms like pain at the injection site, fever, chills, mild fatigue or a headache. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity.*
  
- **If I already had COVID-19 do I still need a vaccine?**
  - *It's unclear how long immunity lasts after having COVID-19. The best way to stop the pandemic and keep yourself and your family safe is to use every tool available, including getting a vaccine, wearing a mask, washing your hands often, and keeping at least six feet apart from others.*
  
- **If I wear a mask and wash my hands, I don't need a COVID-19 vaccine.**
  - *The best way to stop the pandemic and keep yourself and your family safe is to use every tool available. Masks can help keep you from catching COVID-19, but if you are exposed, a vaccine prepares your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus.*
  
- **Will there be enough vaccines for everyone?**
  - *There is a national plan to rollout vaccines across the country starting in mid-December. There won't be enough vaccines for everyone immediately, but supplies will increase over time. Health care workers and adult residents and of long-term care facilities will get the vaccine first. Other groups include essential workers and people considered at high risk or severe COVID-19 due to underlying health conditions. All adults should be able to get vaccinated later in 2021.*
  
- **After I get vaccine, do I still have to wear a mask?**
  - *The pandemic isn't over. The best way to stop the pandemic and keep yourself and your family safe is to use every tool available including wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently, and watching your distance from others – especially avoiding crowds and gatherings.*