

## Talking Points on Vaccination of Pennsylvanians

- We know that there is significant interest among all Pennsylvanians about when they will get vaccinated.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Health is working to ensure that everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine can get it.
  - We must have patience as the amount of vaccine available to Pennsylvanians is limited.
  - It will take several months before there's enough vaccine available for everyone.
- Current science suggests that the approved COVID-19 vaccines will offer some level of protection against all strains of the virus that cause COVID-19.
- While the vaccine supply remains limited, our goals are to prioritize vaccinating people to provide maximum community benefits and minimize harms caused by the virus and prioritize vaccinations accordingly.
- We want to ensure the vaccine is provided in a way that is ethical, equitable and efficient, which is why Pennsylvania is taking a phased approach to provide the vaccine as fast as it can be manufactured and distributed.
- We are excited that there is significant interest in getting the COVID-19 vaccination and we urge all Pennsylvanians to continue to be patient in this effort.
- The vaccines that have been approved are safe and effective to protect people from COVID-19.
- The **allocations of vaccine from the Federal government** are currently fluctuating, but **have been and will continue to be relatively low** over the upcoming weeks. This will increase the time it will take to get through Phase 1A.
- As long as the Pennsylvania vaccination program (66 counties outside of Philadelphia) continues to receive an insufficient amount of vaccine to fulfill the demand, providers will need to prepare first and second doses accordingly based on the available amount of vaccine.



- Therefore, **everyone**, regardless if you are in Phase 1A or later, **needs to have patience** during this process. While waiting, you can take the following steps to prepare for getting vaccinated:
  - Continue wearing a mask, washing your hands, and social distancing;
  - Download the COVID Alert PA app to make sure you get an exposure notification alert if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19;
  - Avoid gatherings, even small gatherings, which can spread COVID-19; and
  - Visit the COVID-19 vaccine sub-site of the DOH website to see the latest updates to the vaccination plan and process.
  - Fill out the Your Turn tool to determine eligibility for getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Talking Points on Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)**

- We know that as we move forward, additional vaccines will likely be coming to the market as they complete their trials and move through the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization process.
  - On Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021, the FDA granted the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine an EUA.
  - The department is following the guidance issued by the CDC ACIP and FDA for usage of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) for anyone ages 18 and older.
- The first allocation of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccines will be administered to educators, child care workers, and school staff.
- The vaccination of this group is separate from the ongoing Phase 1A vaccine rollout, which is continuing.
- The initial priority is vaccinating school staff that have regular and sustained in-person contact with students during the regular school day, including teachers and staff working with:
  - Pre-k and elementary students;
  - Students with disabilities;
  - English as a second language learners; and
  - Other vulnerable students.



- This is because younger children are more susceptible to learning loss and their families are more likely to have childcare challenges.
- The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, departments of Education and Health are partnering with the 28 Pennsylvania Intermediate Units (IU) to establish vaccine sites.
- The PA National Guard and AMI Expeditionary Healthcare (AMI) will be partnering to administer these vaccines.
- Pennsylvania received 94,600 doses the week of March 1.
- Each IU region will have at least one vaccination location with most locations starting vaccinations between March 10-13.
- Eligible school staff will receive information about vaccine locations and registration instructions.
- The vaccine remains voluntary.
- More information about this vaccination initiative can be found in press releases from the [Governor's Office of Communications](#) and [PEMA Press Office](#).
- The department will continue to share information as frequently as possible.

### **Second Doses Are Secure**

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health is working to ensure that second doses are secure for everyone.
- There are no differences in the makeup of the first dose of vaccine and the second dose of vaccine.
- If you got your first dose of vaccine already, you should get your second dose from the same provider.
- You can call your first dose vaccine provider for more information.
- The department is actively having conversations with providers, to ensure they have the appropriate doses needed and understand the process for securing second doses of vaccine.
- **Some providers may need to stretch second doses by a week or two, but everyone will receive their second dose.**



- The department is implementing several steps to improve our systems, monitoring and communication with providers to ensure these types of issues do not occur again.

### COVID-19 Website Resources

- Version 6 of the Pennsylvania Interim Vaccination Plan was uploaded to the website on March 4:  
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Programs/Immunizations/PA%20Interim%20Vaccine%20Plan%20V.6.pdf>.
- The Department of Health launched a new tool called Your Turn to help Pennsylvanians understand where they fall in the vaccine prioritization effort and to be alerted when it is their turn to schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine via email.
  - We added several languages, including Spanish, Chinese and German to the Your Turn tool earlier this week.
- The vaccine provider map uses blue dots are used to represent all enrolled vaccine providers that are activated within for COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Previously, a location may have had a green dot, but had used all of their allocation, or had appointments scheduled for their entire allocation. Using blue dots will assist in reminding the public that the provider is the best source of information about whether or not they have vaccine.
- If you do not see blue dots, clear your cache, browser history, or restart the browser, and all dots should appear blue.
- The vaccine provider map will show you providers near you.
- The vaccine [dashboard](#) shows how many people have been vaccinated by county, except Philadelphia, including by day. It also gives demographic information on the health care personnel who have been vaccinated.
- A [commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) explains the current process for getting a vaccine. Pennsylvanians with questions about the vaccination process, or those who need assistance scheduling a vaccine appointment or completing the Your Turn tool, please contact the Pennsylvania



Department of Health at 1-877-724-3258 and someone will be happy to help you.

- The Health Hotline menu can be heard in both English and Spanish. This is done so by connecting callers with a translator to convey information back and forth between the agent and the caller.
- All of the locations that received vaccine and how much they have received can be found on the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution [webpage](#).
- Vaccine [dashboard data](#) can also be found on the website to find more information on the doses administered and showcase demographic information.
- Pennsylvanians can provide feedback on the Pennsylvania COVID-19 Interim Vaccination Plan on the [website](#).
- There are also [FAQs](#) on the website.

## **Vaccination Clinics**

- The Department of Health is working closely with our partners at PEMA to operationalize community vaccination clinics when more vaccine is available. Remember, we are still in Phase 1A and this will take much time.
- In order to set up a community vaccination clinic, you will need to partner with an enrolled vaccine provider. That provider would really be taking the majority of the set up/staffing/vaccinating/documenting etc. If this is a strategy you want to pursue they should contact the provider to start planning. They will know the amount of doses they have available and if their bandwidth can sustain the community clinic in 1B.
- This type of clinic may be a good opportunity for employers to get their employees vaccinated when we approach the appropriate phase.
- Further, DOH and PEMA are working together to determine the best way to connect businesses with vaccine providers who may be willing to work directly with employers.



## Vaccines

- Vaccination is a critical tool in bringing this unprecedented pandemic to an end.
- There are three different COVID-19 vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson).
- The Pfizer no longer requires the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be kept ultra-cold, if used within two weeks.
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) is a single-dose vaccine, while Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are two dose vaccines.
- The federal government invested in the development of multiple COVID-19 vaccines with the goal that one or more would be found safe and effective and widespread use would help bring the pandemic to an end.
- Having different types of vaccines available for use, especially ones with different storage and handling requirements and dosing recommendations, can offer more options and flexibility for jurisdictions and vaccine providers.
- All the available vaccines have been proven effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 disease.
- Getting vaccinated with the first vaccine available to you can help protect you from COVID-19.
  
- Moderna side effects include:  
Taken from the Moderna Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Factsheet found at [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers \(fda.gov\)](#):
- Do not get the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine if you have a known history of a severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to any component of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (see Full EUA Prescribing Information).
- For awareness, the warnings label of the Moderna vaccine reads: Appropriate medical treatment to manage immediate allergic reactions must be immediately available in the event an acute anaphylactic reaction occurs following administration of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.
- Monitor Moderna COVID-19 vaccine recipients for the occurrence of immediate adverse reactions according to the Centers for Disease Control



and Prevention guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/>).

Immunocompromised persons, including individuals receiving immunosuppressant therapy, may have a diminished immune response to the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine. The Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine may not protect all vaccine recipients.

- The adverse reactions for the Moderna vaccine include:
  - pain at the injection site
  - fatigue
  - headache
  - myalgia
  - arthralgia
  - chills
  - nausea/vomiting
  - axillary swelling/tenderness
  - fever
  - swelling at the injection site
  - erythema at the injection site
  
- (See Full EUA Prescribing Information) Additional adverse reactions, some of which may be serious, may become apparent with more widespread use of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.
  
- The Pfizer no longer requires the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be kept ultra-cold, if used within two weeks.
  
- Pfizer side effects include:  
Taken from the Pfizer Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Factsheet found at [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(fda.gov\)](#):
- WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?  
You should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine if you:
  - had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of this vaccine
  - had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient of this vaccine.
  
- WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE?





Side effects that have been reported with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine include:

- injection site pain
  - tiredness
  - headache
  - muscle pain
  - chills
  - joint pain
  - fever
  - injection site swelling
  - injection site redness
  - nausea
  - feeling unwell
  - swollen lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy)
  
- There is a remote chance that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. For this reason, your vaccination provider may ask you to stay at the place where you received your vaccine for monitoring after vaccination.
  - Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include:
    - Difficulty breathing
    - Swelling of your face and throat
    - A fast heartbeat
    - A bad rash all over your body
    - Dizziness and weakness
  
- These may not be all the possible side effects of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Serious and unexpected side effects may occur. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is still being studied in clinical trials.
  
- **WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?**  
If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital. Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.



- In the event a patient cannot receive their second shot, the Department would like to provide clarification on what providers should do with the second dose. Providers should allow the vaccine expiration date guide their response. That is, if someone misses their second dose, and there is still some time to “save” a dose without vaccine expiring, they should do so and make every effort to get that individual rescheduled. If, however, vaccine is on the verge of expiring, providers should use it for a first dose and make plans to have vaccine available for the second dose for both the rescheduled and new patient.
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) side effects include:  
Taken from the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Factsheet found at <https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download>:
- WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE JANSSEN COVID-19 VACCINE?

Side effects that have been reported with the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine include:

- Injection site reactions: pain, redness of the skin and swelling.
- General side effects: headache, feeling very tired, muscle aches, nausea, and fever. There is a remote chance that the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction.

A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a dose of the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine. For this reason, your vaccination provider may ask you to stay at the place where you received your vaccine for monitoring after vaccination. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include:

- Difficulty breathing,
- Swelling of your face and throat,
- A fast heartbeat,
- A bad rash all over your body,
- Dizziness and weakness.

These may not be all the possible side effects of the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine. Serious and unexpected effects may occur. The Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine is still being studied in clinical trials.

- **WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?**

If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital. Call the vaccination provider or your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away. Report vaccine side effects to FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). The VAERS toll-free number is 1-800-822-7967 or report online to <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>. Please include “Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine EUA” in the first line of box #18 of the report form.

### **Guidance**

- Given the currently limited information on how much the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may reduce transmission in the general population and how long protection lasts, **vaccinated persons should continue to follow all current guidance to protect themselves and others**. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, washing hands often, following CDC travel guidance, **following quarantine guidance after an exposure to someone with COVID-19**, and following any applicable workplace or school guidance, including guidance related to personal protective equipment use or SARS-CoV-2 testing.
- It’s important that people take every precaution to protect themselves against COVID-19. This means, Pennsylvanians will still need to wear a mask, social distance, and follow other mitigation efforts like frequent hand-washing, using hand sanitizer and avoiding large gatherings.
- Wait at least 14 days before getting any other vaccine, including a flu or shingles vaccine, if you get your COVID-19 vaccine first. And if you get another vaccine first, wait at least 14 days before getting your COVID-19 vaccine.



- If a COVID-19 vaccine is inadvertently given within 14 days of another vaccine, you do **not** need to restart the COVID-19 vaccine series; you should still complete the series on schedule. When more data are available on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines administered simultaneously with other vaccines, CDC may update this recommendation.
- The state's Federal Pharmacy Partners, CVS and Walgreens, are working to vaccinate all those in long-term care facilities that are part of the program. For facilities that have three clinics, first doses may be provided at the first and second clinics. At the third clinic, only second doses will be provided. After the completion of the two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series, facilities will return to working with the vaccination provider it uses for routine vaccines.

### **Vaccine Equity**

- The department is prioritizing ensuring that providers use an equitable approach to vaccinate their populations once vaccine delivery is received.
- It's very important to not compare what is being done in Pennsylvania to other states. We have two jurisdictional programs (Philadelphia and Pennsylvania's other 66 counties) to vaccinate Pennsylvanians. Additionally, Pennsylvania's population, size, population 65 and older, population in long-term care facilities and other factors make a comparison with other states inaccurate. We are working to vaccinate our Phase 1A populations as quickly as possible, as vaccine is available to administer. Vaccinating individuals in our nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living residences and other long-term care facilities has been a significant task, and we appreciate the work of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership and Rite Aid in this.
- Pennsylvania is also being sure that second doses will be available when it is appropriate. This is different from some other states, where they have been using all doses as first doses. By reserving second doses from a state level, we want vaccine providers to use all vaccine received as first doses, and we will ensure they receive their second doses appropriately. We are committed to ensuring that second doses are there for individuals when they need them.



- Public health crises have the potential to affect all populations but typically have more severe impacts on underserved populations, making those populations more vulnerable to severe illness and death. A first step in developing an equitable vaccine distribution plan is to understand and identify populations most at risk of contracting COVID-19 and severe illness.
- Review of Census data, population social risk factors, health statuses, targeted communication campaigns and education material—including partnership trusted messenger service efforts, and translation service assistance are all strategies studied and implemented. The Department’s Health Equity Response Team continues to provide insight on communication strategies and vaccine rollout logistics for their areas of expertise. This working relationship reinforces public-private partnerships between the commonwealth and stakeholders.
- Additionally, the education of providers and laboratories on the importance of reporting race and ethnicity continues to occur to ensure we are collecting the most complete and actionable data to make informed evidence-based decisions.
- Throughout our entire vaccination effort, we will continue to look at vulnerability indexes to ensure that we are removing barriers for vaccine in marginalized communities. There is also a significant need for trusted individuals in communities to share accurate information for individuals to make the best-educated decision around vaccinations.