



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 13, 2021**

## **Department of Health: Pause on Johnson & Johnson Vaccinations in Pennsylvania, FDA/CDC Announcement Highlights Vaccine Evaluation Process is Working**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Department of Health today notified all COVID-19 vaccine providers to pause administering doses of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine until at least April 20 following the recommendation out of an abundance of caution in a joint release from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Federal Drug Administration (FDA).

The department is taking these steps as a precaution until the CDC and FDA have time to review six incidents of rare blood clots that occurred within two weeks of receiving Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. The CDC is convening an emergency meeting tomorrow of the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices to further review cases for any details on the significance of this rare occurrence.

These six cases occurred in women between 18 and 48 who were among the 6.8 million Americans who received the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. This announcement shows that the federal oversight process of a vaccine's safety and effectiveness is working, and all steps are being taken to protect Americans.

“While this announcement is challenging, it highlights the vaccine evaluation process,” Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam said. “The CDC and the FDA are closely monitoring vaccines for safety and effectiveness, and if there is a cause for concern, they will take action because safety is paramount. This protocol should give all Pennsylvanians confidence in the safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine, and individuals should proceed with getting vaccinated as soon as possible to fight the virus, particularly as our case counts rise.”

Individuals who have appointments scheduled to receive a Pfizer or Moderna vaccination should keep those appointments. If you are not aware of which vaccine type you are scheduled to receive, be assured that effective immediately, providers will not be administering the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine.

If you received the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine and have any health concerns, contact your health care provider. People who have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks of their vaccination should contact their health care provider. For more information, find the CDC/FDA guidance online [here](#).

The department also has sent communications to stakeholder groups and others who have received the J&J vaccine as a part of a special vaccination initiative.

**While vaccine supply from the federal government remains limited, the Department of Health is working to ensure the vaccine is provided in a way that is ethical, equitable and efficient. To keep Pennsylvanians informed about vaccination efforts:**

- The [Your Turn](#) tool provides a way to register to be alerted when it's your turn to be vaccinated.
- A [commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) explains the current process for getting one. Pennsylvanians with questions about the vaccination process can call the Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- [Vaccine provider map](#) to find a COVID-19 vaccine provider near you.
- 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](#) by clicking on the Plan Feedback Form square under Popular Vaccine Topics [here](#).
- Frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

**The Wolf Administration stresses the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- If you must go out, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.
- Download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight. The free app can be found in the [Google Play Store](#) and the [Apple App Store](#) by searching for "covid alert pa".

**Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics**

- [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- [Photos of the state's lab in Exton](#) (for download and use)
- [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)