

## COVID-19 Vaccine Information

### **CURRENT VACCINE STATUS:**

As of February 2021, two vaccines, one from Pfizer and a second from Moderna, have been authorized for emergency use, and additional vaccines are moving quickly through the testing and authorization process at the Food & Drug Administration. Tens of millions of doses have been shipped, and many health care and emergency workers, as well as high-risk people have been vaccinated. In the next two to three months, perhaps even sooner, everyone in Carroll County who feels comfortable receiving the vaccine will, hopefully, be able to be vaccinated.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?**

You may call the Carroll County Public Health Department (815-244-8855) and get your name(s) into their vaccination data base. And be sure to answer your phone for the next few weeks so you do not miss a call from the Health Department. In addition, check the Health Department's website at [www.ccphd.org](http://www.ccphd.org) for periodic updates.

The Illinois Department of Public Health ([www.dph.illinois.gov](http://www.dph.illinois.gov)) also has vaccine/vaccination information on their website including a list of "vaccination locations" that will be updated as vaccine sites across the state are identified (None are listed in Carroll County as of 02/19/2021). In addition, the site provides information on how to make an appointment, updates on the state's vaccination plan and answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccine.

Finally, stay in touch with your local health care provider. Providers will be contacting their patients once local vaccine sites are determined and vaccine becomes more widely available for subsequent phases of the state's vaccination plan.

### **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Does this mean we can all resume our pre-pandemic lives again soon? Unfortunately, the answer is no. "The vaccine is just the first chapter in the endgame, not the endgame itself", according to medical infectious disease

experts at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. These same specialists indicate that “we need up to 80% of the U.S. population to get the vaccine before we can truly return to our “normal” pre-COVID lifestyles”. In fact, in a recent survey of 700 epidemiologists, over 50% indicated that they would not change their personal safety behavior until the vast majority of the population was vaccinated.

### **SHOULD I BE HESITANT TO GET A VACCINE THAT WAS CREATED SO QUICKLY?**

Absolutely not, say health experts. More than 73,000 people participated in the Pfizer and Moderna clinical trials and neither study showed any serious safety concerns. According to scientists involved in the vaccine development process, the reason that the vaccines were developed so quickly was because the government threw a ton of money at the problem and not because corners were cut. The process was not changed, it was just compressed.

### **HOW LONG AFTER MY FIRST VACCINE DOSE DO I BEGIN TO DEVELOP IMMUNITY? HOW SAFE AM I?**

The Pfizer vaccine was shown to be only 52% effective 21 days after the first dose. That’s not so safe. Both doses are required to get to the 95% effective threshold found in the clinical trials. **WE NEED TO BE PATIENT!** The vaccines were found to attain effective levels 21 days after both doses in the Pfizer trials and 28 days in the Moderna studies, so it will likely be several weeks after the second dose before the full benefit of the vaccine is in place. Instructions about this will be provided by health care professionals when the vaccines are given.

### **ONCE I AM FULLY VACCINATED, CAN I GO BACK TO NORMAL LIFE?**

Unfortunately, NO. According to infectious disease professionals, everyone, vaccinated or not, will need to continue current recommendations regarding social distancing, wearing masks and avoiding large groups. This is because up to 10% of vaccinated individuals will not be protected from getting COVID-19 and because reinfection, while uncommon, may still occur. And it is important to note that, the vaccine itself doesn’t prevent contracting the virus; it simply prepares the body to mount a vigorous defense so that the resulting illness is far less likely to be life threatening. That’s why it’s key to reach the point where 80% of the population has been inoculated and we have enough people with antibodies that

won't perpetuate the disease. When might that be? No one knows for sure, but most experts believe that we may have to wait until fall for that happy moment.

### **SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO THE VACCINE?**

Not unless you have a history of anaphylaxis, a severe form of allergic reaction. According to health care experts, less than 5% of the population experience these types of severe allergic reactions. Anyone with a history of anaphylactic reactions to food, drugs or vaccines should consult with their doctor before taking any of the vaccines.