

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

April 29, 2021

What we heard this week:

There seems to be a national trend of people skipping their second doses. Are Delawareans skipping doses?

- According to the CDC, nearly 8% of Americans who've received their first dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines have missed their follow-up appointments to receive the second dose. Reasons include fear of experiencing side effects, while others feel like one dose should be enough protection against the virus.
- While some of this is occurring in Delaware, we do not have data indicating this is a significant issue.
- The COVID-19 vaccine reaches full efficacy 14 days after the second dose of Pfizer and Moderna, and after one dose of J&J (this is a one-dose vaccine). For Pfizer and Moderna, The science shows that the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine provides 52% to 80% protection, whereas it is up to 95% after two doses.
- It is important to know that side effects from the vaccine are limited, tolerable and temporary. It is better than getting COVID-19 as even normally healthy people of all ages have been sidelined for days, weeks or months with impacts from the disease.
- If boosters are needed to support vaccine efficacy, it's important to have gotten both doses so that the booster can maximize the effect of the completed vaccine series.

When is updated mask guidance expected?

- The CDC eased its guidelines Tuesday on the wearing of masks outdoors.
- Fully vaccinated people don't need to wear masks outdoors unless they are in a crowded setting where it's hard to maintain social distancing.
- Unvaccinated people — (including those who only have one dose of Moderna or Pfizer) - should wear masks at small outdoor gatherings that include other unvaccinated people. They also should keep their faces covered when dining at outdoor restaurants with friends from multiple households. However, they do not have to wear masks outdoors when they walk, bike or run alone or with members of their household. They can also go without a mask in small outdoor gatherings with fully vaccinated people.
- Everyone, fully vaccinated or not, should keep wearing masks at crowded outdoor events such as concerts or sporting events.
- The agency continues to recommend masks at indoor public places, such as hair salons, restaurants, shopping centers, gyms, museums and movie theaters, saying that is still the safer course even for vaccinated people.

Is COVID-19 vaccine demand decreasing in Delaware?

- The expectation is for the COVID-19 vaccination rate to be moderate and fluctuate.
- Efforts will continue to deliver vaccine to those most at risk and to get those most eager vaccinated possible.
- Reaching out to other populations will take time and focus.
- We are still seeing demand but we must make additional efforts to reach people in locations that are more convenient to them.

Can I walk up to a state-run vaccination site and receive a vaccine?

- Each site varies. It's most helpful to sign up for the state waitlist at vaccinerequest.delaware.gov - or, by calling the DPH Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-643-1715 or emailing vaccine@delaware.gov. However, the state is making increasing opportunities to get vaccinated by walking up to an event, available.
- DPH Clinics in Georgetown, Seaford, Milford, Dover, and Wilmington (Porter) are also holding walk-in hours.

Can we receive the J&J vaccine in Delaware? Is it safe?

- Yes.
- On Friday, April 23, 2021, the CDC and FDA lifted the pause in the administration of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine, but added warning to EUA, Patient Fact Sheet and Health Care Provider Fact Sheet that women under 50 should be aware of the issue with blood clots in combination with low platelets. This is referred to as thrombosis-thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS).
- The FDA and CDC have confidence that this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19.
- The FDA has determined that the available data show that the vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks in individuals 18 years of age and older. At this time, the available data suggest that the chance of TTS occurring is very low, but the FDA and CDC will remain vigilant in continuing to investigate this risk, and ask providers to make women under 50 aware of it.
- DPH authorized providers to resume J&J as of Monday, April 26, 2021.
- J&J vaccine events are planned for this weekend in Delaware.

Why is there an increase in COVID-19 cases if we have distributed over 700K doses?

- While nearly 290,000 Delawareans are fully vaccinated, there is still a significant number of Delawareans that have not been.
- Laxed-behavior, COVID-fatigue, and variants have also contributed to the rise in cases. However, we are seeing a decrease in cases this week.
- It's important that we continue the mitigation methods we know that work as we get people vaccinated including wearing a mask, washing your hands, continuing to social distance, and getting tested.