

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

March 12, 2021

I am not 65 but I have serious conditions, are there any exceptions that can be made?

- The Division of Public Health (DPH), determines which groups to focus on for vaccination based on guidance from the CDC's medical advisory committee and recommendations from the Delaware Public Health and Medical Ethics Advisory Group.
- The CDC focuses first on groups that are most at risk based on how the virus is transmitted (close contact, indoor facilities), the severity rate of the virus in the community, and based on the prioritized population groups.
- The CDC has prioritized health care staff first, persons 75+ and certain frontline workers first, and those with underlying health conditions third.
- At this time, Delaware is in Phase 1B which includes persons 65+ and certain frontline workers. As soon as we have been able to vaccinate most of this group we will be able to move ahead to help those with underlying health conditions. We hope this will occur very soon.
- Delaware is working to get the COVID-19 vaccine to as many adults as quickly as possible but lack of adequate vaccine supply to meet demand continues to be a limiting factor.
- Delaware's plan also ensures the vaccine is distributed as safely and equitably as possible, and in ways that protect the most at-risk people first.
- Learn more about when, where and how to get the COVID-19 vaccine at de.gov/covidvaccine

I am fully vaccinated, and so is the person I am hanging out with, why do we still need to wear masks?

- DPH supports the guidelines recently announced by the CDC regarding fully vaccinated individuals.
- If you are fully vaccinated and so is the person that you are hanging out with, you do not have to wear a mask unless you are in public, with those who are high-risk, and/or with people of multiple households.
- This guidance is meant to be applied to personal residences and not public spaces or worksites.
- If you are fully vaccinated, you can:
 - Visit with other fully vaccinated people in your home or theirs – no mask or distance
 - Visit with those from a single household who are low-risk – no mask or distance
 - Do not have to quarantine or test after known exposure to someone who has COVID unless you have symptoms (then you should do both)

We have vaccinated a lot of older people, why can't we fully open the state? The most vulnerable population has been vaccinated.

- Approximately 10% of our population has been vaccinated at this time, leaving approximately 90% that is not.
- 106,000 seniors have received at least one dose, with 63,000 under 65.*
- The waiting list now has an estimated 71,000 of 133,000 vaccinated with at least one dose.*
- While we are seeing a decrease in cases, there are still variants of the virus – U.K. and South African – in our population that are very contagious.
- We want to move forward and decrease restrictions that are in place, but it has to be done as safely as possible.

- Continuing prevention measures is important until we reach a level of herd immunity. Herd immunity occurs when a majority of the population has been vaccinated to protect themselves from the virus. Wear a mask to protect those who have not yet received the vaccine.

*Does not include 3/6 and 3/7 vaccination events.

Florida and Texas are completely open and doing fine, why not follow their reopening plan?

- While we are seeing a decrease in cases, there are still variants of the virus – U.K. and South African – in our population that are very contagious.
- We want to move forward and decrease restrictions that are in place, but it has to be done as safely as possible.
- With respect to these states, DPH believes that it would be an ill-informed decision to completely open the state. It is not consistent with the guidance of public health experts, the CDC and National Institutes of Health
- Continuing prevention measures is important until we reach a level of herd immunity. Herd immunity occurs when a majority of the population has been vaccinated to protect themselves from the virus. Wear a mask to protect those who have not yet received the vaccine.

Why does this one (J&J) only take one shot instead of two?

- The manufacturers of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine determined through clinical trials that its vaccine could achieve a high level of protection and effectiveness after just one dose.
- It uses a different platform for delivering the vaccine than Pfizer and Moderna. It uses an adenovirus platform which involves inserting a bit of the genetic material from the virus (but not the live virus) into a weakened version of the cold virus.
- The immune system responds by switching on the cells' alarm systems to activate immune cells nearby. The immune cells spot the intruder proteins of COVID-19 to fight the infection.

Will teachers be allowed to go back to work if they are not vaccinated?

- Yes, however, DPH strongly encourages educators to please get vaccinated where available, regardless of vaccine type.
- Getting vaccinated will reduce the chance that you will get COVID and get seriously ill from the disease. This is especially important as children are not able to be vaccinated at this time.
- Vaccination provides an additional layer of protection for you.

If I take my mother or father to be vaccinated, even though I don't fall in the age range, can I be vaccinated as well?

- Delaware is working to get the COVID-19 vaccine to as many adults as quickly as possible.
- Delaware's plan also ensures the vaccine is distributed as safely and equitably as possible, and in ways that **protect the most at-risk people first**.
- If you work in health care and have direct patient contact — or if you live in a long-term care facility — you are eligible to get the vaccine now, if you haven't already.
- As of mid-January, vaccines were made available to people age 65 and older, and certain groups of frontline essential workers, including fire, police, correctional officers, and teachers/education staff, as well as postal, food manufacturing, poultry, transit and grocery store workers.
- Learn more about when, where and how to get the COVID-19 vaccine at de.gov/covidvaccine

My grandparents don't have transportation. Can someone come to the home and get them vaccinated?

- Delaware is working to ensure all residents have fair shot at COVID-19 vaccine doses.
- Community partners across the state are coordinating transportation for the vaccine.
- Please e-mail vaccine@delaware.gov if you need help finding transportation to a vaccination appointment.