



# EISENHOWER HEALTH

January 8, 2021

Eisenhower is experiencing the highest incidence of COVID-19 inpatients since the epidemic began. Today, we have 155 patients in the COVID unit and 23 in the ICU (we increased our ICU capacity to handle 34 patients). With that in mind, let's discuss the vaccines and vaccinations. We hope the following question and answer format will clarify issues and even develop a connection for you to ask further questions which we intend to answer in follow-up email communications. So, let's begin.

## **When can I expect to be vaccinated?**

Eisenhower Health (like most California hospitals) was given a limited quantity of vaccines. We were supplied with the Pfizer vaccine and used the December vaccines to inoculate our highest risk frontline COVID health care employees and medical staff. When additional vaccines arrived in January, we continued to distribute the vaccine to our internally organized list, moving from those who were highest risk of infection to high risk, to moderate to low risk health care employees as directed in the Phase 1A Tier 1 of the Riverside University Health System Public Health Vaccination Plan. Eisenhower must continue to follow the federal and state guidelines, by vaccinating all of its employees and medical staff first before turning to its community of patients.

Based on our limited supply of vaccine (which is our primary issue) and the time and logistics of vaccinating almost 5,000 health care employees and medical staff, we will probably complete this phase by the fourth week of January (we hope for 100% to be vaccinated). Public Health opened Tier 2 & 3 of their Phase 1 plan on January 5<sup>th</sup> covering other Community Healthcare Workers. Phase 1b will address patients over the age of 75, followed by Phase 1c that will vaccinate persons 65-74 years of age and also persons aged 16-64 with medical conditions that increase the risk for severe Covid-19. While there is currently not an established Public Health timeline for Phase 1b and 1c patient vaccinations, we hope these will begin to become available for phase 1b for those 75 years and above in February.

## **How will Eisenhower Health decide who gets vaccinated first? How will it prioritize older patients?**

Since the state of California has assigned responsibility to the retail pharmacies for vaccinations for people in assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, Eisenhower will focus on its base of patients. Right now we are working toward finalizing the plan for safe patient vaccinations under these state guidelines.

We are considering notifying and scheduling you through your MyChart secure App, your doctor's office, an Eisenhower clinic you frequent, or a direct registration process where we will send you a link. Since we have over 100,000 patients, and the average age is in the 70s (and at this age, most people already have two to three risk factors other than age) Eisenhower has a logistical challenge. Our goal is to plan a well-organized, safe, and effective launch once we're at that point. So, please bear with us, and we will share the plan with you over the coming weeks once it has undergone county review.

**Why has the vaccine distribution been so slow in California?**

Unfortunately, the entire state was not given a sufficient first supply in December to distribute any great quantities to its more than 400 hospitals. Vaccines are distributed through each county in combination with direct shipments from Pfizer pharmaceuticals, which in turn distributes to each hospital. With its increasing demand, and living in a state with the nation's highest total population and now highest number of COVID positive patients (thus the highest demand), we have experienced more delays than most states.

**Is being vaccinated different than just coming in for a flu shot?**

Yes, especially with the Pfizer vaccine. This vaccine requires exacting clinical and logistical expertise to administer properly. For example, once we remove a vial from the -80° Celsius freezer, it requires defrosting, being shaken 10 times, then an additive injected, then shaken again 10 times, then a filling of syringes and hopefully patients ready and waiting. Once the vaccine is thawed and prepared, staff have only 6 hours to administer the vaccine. The shot is short, but after vaccination, we require a patient to remain for 15 minutes for their safety with a nurse to observe and ask whether you feel light-headed or have any adverse reaction. Finally, you need to walk away with a date for your second shot, and a card, documenting your vaccination type and date. This scenario will vary with the two shot Moderna vaccine, which does not require the frozen temperatures (we do not know if we will receive Moderna) and with other one-shot vaccines.

**When would I expect the second Pfizer shot?**

At least 21 days and no more than 25 days after the first shot. Once you have the second shot, within 10 days, you should have 95% immunity to COVID-19. Please remember that until most of the country is vaccinated, it will be important to continue to maintain distance and properly mask to help diminish the continued spread of the disease.

**What should I do if I have had COVID-19?**

You will still be asked to be vaccinated; however, you will need to wait until day 91 after your positive test date (this guideline was established by the CDC).

**Is there any information regarding the new mutated strain of COVID-19 originally discovered in England, now making its way to the United States?**

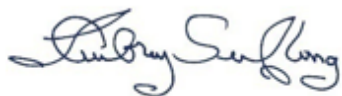
We know it is contagious, probably more contagious than the first strain. We don't have enough information about it to answer many questions yet. However, experts believe the vaccination will help protect patients from this mutation.

We hope this helps. Again, please send us any further questions. Since it will be weeks before your first vaccination, please continue to be diligent about protecting yourself and others. And, if you believe you need to be tested or feel you need to come to the hospital (especially if you are short of breath) please call 911. Also, if you wish to see additional details about COVID-19, testing, vaccines, and county news, you can go to [//EisenhowerHealth.org/Coronavirus](https://EisenhowerHealth.org/Coronavirus).

We feel so grateful for you and know that we continue to fight the good fight.

Let's stay in touch with each other.

Sincerely,



G. Aubrey Serfling  
President/CEO



Martin Massiello  
Executive VP/COO



Michael Landes  
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