COVID-19 VACCINE
MODERNA & PFIZER FACT SHEET

CDC Guidelines

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended that the first doses of a coronavirus vaccine should be given to healthcare workers, emergency medical workers because of their exposure to the virus and their critical role in keeping hospitals and clinics functioning. Getting a COVID vaccine is a safer choice than natural immunity from getting a COVID-19 infection. If you get COVID-19 infection, you are at risk of getting very sick with long term side effects as well as risking giving it to loved ones and your community members.

How the Vaccine Works

Messenger RNA vaccines (mRNA) have strands of genetic material inside a special coating that helps the mRNA enter the muscle cells near the vaccination site. mRNA has instructions that tell the cell to make a piece of protein that is unique to SARS-CoV-2 and causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies and activating T-cells to fight off what it thinks is an infection. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means the immune system is primed to protect against future infection.

Your cell breaks down the mRNA vaccine after the immune system responds and disposes of the mRNA using enzymes in your cells. It is important to note that the mRNA strand never enters the cell's nucleus or affects any of your genetic material.

Effectiveness and Dosing Information

The COVID-19 vaccine has a proven effectiveness of 95 percent after 2 doses given 3-4 weeks apart. Two doses are required in order to be effective. Be sure to get your second shot. No steps were skipped during the clinical trial process for the COVID-19 vaccine. Tens of thousands of people were involved and development happened quickly due to shortening administrative processes and doing some of the steps at the same time instead of one after another. Vaccine safety checks are on-going and have not been compromised. Per leading CDC experts: If 30% to 50% of the population don't get vaccinated, the vaccine has no chance of becoming effective in the community. We need 70% or more to get the vaccine.

Possible Side Effects

Common side effects of vaccines include pain, swelling or redness at the injection site, mild fever, chills, fatigue, headache and muscle and joint aches. These typically last two days or less. These side effects can be a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It is working and building up protection against disease.

What Should I Do if I Experience Side Effects? Considerations for Reporting to Work

If you experience side effects that can occur in about 10% of people, discuss with your supervisor your health needs and if it will impact your work for the day. If you desire COVID testing due to the severity of your symptoms this is always available through the SEARHC employee health department.

Will I Still Need to Socially Distance After Getting Vaccinated?

To protect the safety of the community and your colleagues, you must still socially distance and wear facial masks after you have been vaccinated. Because the vaccine will be available in limited amounts, it will take a significant amount of time before everyone in our communities has received both doses and immunity is widespread. Until then, consistently observing the safety protocols will help protect all members of the community, even if you have been fully vaccinated. The safety protocols currently in place in SEARHC facilities will continue to be implemented. These include screening at every hospital and health facility entrance, masking requirements, visitation limitations, employee testing, and social distancing in our waiting rooms. Vaccination, handwashing, physically distancing, and wearing face masks will all work together to end the pandemic much faster than anyone tool alone. Thank you for your commitment to your co-workers, your patients and your community.

SEARHC
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM