

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I sign up for a vaccination?

A. The Sangamon County Department of Public Health website (<https://scdph.org/>) is offering online scheduling. You may also schedule through the Department's Hotline at 217-321-2606. At this time, all vaccination appointments are taken through February 1 based on the current supply of the vaccine. The Department is not offering a waiting list. Individuals must check back regularly to secure an appointment. Notification of vaccine availability and eligibility to receive the vaccine will be posted on the website, local media, public service announcements and social media. ***Church volunteers and staff are available to assist those who are having difficulties navigating the website or who may need assistance getting to the vaccination location.***

Q. How will I know when I am eligible to receive the vaccine?

A. There will be two phases of vaccinations - Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 is focused on reaching critical populations and is broken down into three subphases. Phase 1a is for healthcare personnel (both hospital and non-hospital), long-term care facility and congregate care staff and residents. Phase 1b is for all persons 65 years and older, frontline essential workers such as first responders, law enforcement, education, public transit, food and agriculture workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, and shelter workers. Phase 1c is for persons aged 16-64 with medical conditions that increase the risk. Other essential workers are also included in this sub-phase (see Department website). ***Currently persons who are in the 1a or 1b categories may sign up for an appointment as the vaccine comes available.***

Q. Is a COVID-19 vaccine safe?

A. The vaccine has undergone the rigorous scientific and clinical testing that all vaccines in development receive. The COVID-19 vaccine took less time than other vaccines to develop because scientists had already begun research for a coronavirus vaccine during previous outbreaks caused by related coronaviruses. The U.S. vaccine safety system is a deliberate and multi-phase process to ensure all vaccines are as safe as possible.

Q: How many doses of the vaccine will persons receive, and how much time is there between doses?

A: There are two different vaccines – one by Pfizer and one by Moderna. They both require two doses, but there are a few differences. One of the differences is that the two Pfizer doses must be separated by an interval of 21 days, while the two Moderna doses must be separated by an interval of 28 days. The doses cannot be interchanged. For example, a person cannot get the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine and the second dose of the Moderna vaccine.

Q. How long will it take for COVID-19 vaccines to take effect?

A. The COVID-19 vaccine is expected to provide some protection a couple of weeks after your first shot and reaches its greatest effectiveness after your second shot. It is very important to take the second shot within the recommended time period for maximum vaccine effectiveness.

Q. What are the side effects of this vaccine?

A. Some people may experience side effects, which are a part of the normal immune response to a vaccine. The majority of the side effects, while not seen in every individual, are signs that your body is recognizing the vaccine and mounting an immune response. Based on prior studies, side effects may include pain, redness and swelling at the site of the injection, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, nausea, malaise, and swollen lymph nodes. Side effects may be more frequent after the 2nd shot (booster) and less frequent among older adults.

Q: Does the vaccine contain a virus?

A: The vaccine that is currently available does not contain a live or weakened virus. It contains the gene for a virus protein. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine or infect others from receiving the COVID19 vaccine, because the vaccine contains no live virus. Instead, the vaccine directs your body to produce a protein that teaches your body how to fight off the virus.

Q. Do I have to get both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine?

A. A seasonal flu vaccine will not protect you from COVID-19. Being infected with both the flu and COVID-19 at the same time could lead to more severe illness, which is why it is important now more than ever to get the flu vaccine.

Q. If I get the vaccine, can I quit wearing a mask?

A. No. While the COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective, it not 100% effective. Until the COVID-19 pandemic is controlled, people who receive the vaccine need to continue the use of facemasks, social distancing, and regular hand washing. This protects you as well as your family and community.

Q: What is the cost of the vaccine?

A: The federal government will cover the cost of the production and distribution of the vaccine. There is no cost to individuals for the vaccine. Vaccination providers can charge an administration fee for giving the shot. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration at the US Department of Health and Human Services. The administrative fees will not be passed on to the patient in the form of a co-pay or deductible.