

From Our Parish Nurse – COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Last evening, on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, The Region Ahead Alliance put together an informational virtual event in partnership with local healthcare and vaccination authorities to provide key information about the COVID vaccine and when/how local citizens will be able to schedule their own vaccination. The panel included a member of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Morin from the Holston Medical Group, Dr. David Kirschke from the Northeast Regional Health Office, Dr. Stephen May from Sullivan County, Dr. Karen Shelton from the Virginia Department of Health, and Jamie Swift, a Chief Inspector for Ballad Health Infectious Disease and Prevention Department.

Dr. Morin discussed that there are 2 manufacturers for the COVID vaccine: Pfizer and Moderna. With all the research and studies for both over the past year, there have not been any safety issues. The vaccine for each manufacturer requires two doses.

With Pfizer, you receive the second dose 3 weeks after the first.

With Moderna, you receive the second dose 4 weeks after the first.

Typical side effects last about 1-3 days after the first dose, and typically a little longer after the second dose. These typical side effects include:

- Tenderness in the arm which received the vaccine
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle Aches (occurs in 1 of 5 people)
- Gastro issues in either stomach or intestines (occurs in about 10%)

There are still ongoing studies, but so far the vaccine has appeared to protect about 95% of those who have received it, which is a much greater percentage than those who receive the influenza (flu) vaccine. There have been 15 mutations studied so far. The Pfizer vaccine has shown protection against these, Moderna is still being tested now. Due to continuing mutations, there is a need for constant surveillance that will be ongoing to ensure protection with the vaccine.

Dr. Kirschke spoke about the allocation of the vaccine. At this time, those counties with the most social vulnerability complex (based on population) will receive more vaccines; however, each county will receive a minimum of 100 vaccines. Most vaccination sites will not know which manufacturer (Pfizer or Moderna) you will receive when you schedule since they do not receive the vaccines sometimes until the day before. You will find out when you receive the first dose. You will also receive a vaccination card which will have all of the

information about your vaccine, along with when you should receive the second. The second dose must be by the same manufacturer and so individuals will know for the second dose which they are receiving. Some locations may be able to schedule you before you leave; others will call you when it is time to come back.

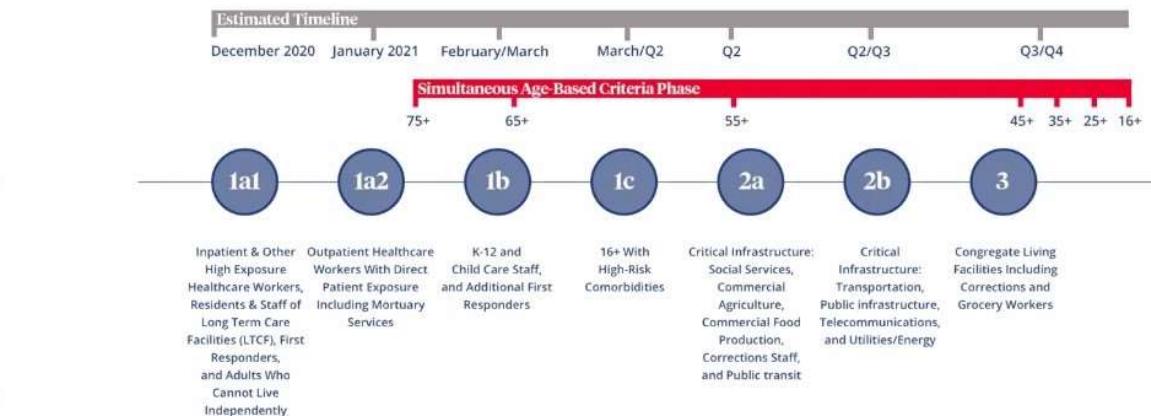
Please be patient when trying to get an appointment for the vaccine; it will take time. All that is needed to schedule is first and last name, phone number, and email (as a backup and if available). The vaccine itself is free; however, if you have insurance, please bring your insurance card with you, along with a photo ID. Please ensure that you have a full tank of gas when you go, as there will be a line.

There are recommendations for the phases from the CDC for priority of receiving the vaccine.

VACCINATIONS 101

What You Need To Know

Tennessee Eligibility Phases



A.H.E.A.D.

Appalachian Highlands Economic Aid Directory

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What to mention or questions you'll be asked when scheduling:

- Do you have any ALLERGIES?
- Do you have or have you had a FEVER?
- Do you have a BLEEDING DISORDER or are you on a BLOOD THINNER?
- Are you in any way IMMUNO-COMPROMISED?
- Are you on a medicine that affects your IMMUNE SYSTEM?
- Are you PREGNANT or planning to become pregnant?
- Are you BREASTFEEDING?

- Have you received ANOTHER COVID-19 VACCINE?

Dr. May also noted that Sullivan County is working slightly different than the rest of Tennessee and suggests that people visit the following website for specifics to that county: sullivanhealth.org

Dr. Shelton also advises that Virginia is only slightly different than Tennessee, but for those who live/work on border cities, to visit Virginia Department of Health's website pertaining to the vaccine: vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine. The website has an eligibility tool to find out what phase you are in for the vaccine and that most of their sites, you may ask which manufacturer of the vaccine you will be receiving when you call to schedule. She also noted that if you live in Tennessee but work in Virginia, you are eligible for the vaccine in Virginia under the phase that your employer falls.

Ms. Swift also noted that even after receiving the vaccine, people should still be wearing face masks, practice social distancing, and practice good hygiene. There are still ongoing studies and for now, taking precautions is safer until there is a better handle on the pandemic.

The panel also noted that due to similar symptoms between COVID-19, influenza, strep throat, and other illnesses, that if you have any symptoms, you should isolate and figure out what you may have and get tested accordingly before going back out into the public.

It is suggested that everyone receive the flu vaccine, no matter if you have had COVID or not. If you are pregnant, please consult your provider first. If you had COVID-19 and received treatments, please advise when you call to schedule, as you must have a 90 waiting period prior to receiving the vaccine. And you must have quarantine for 14-21 days from time of positive test and have no symptoms before being able to receive the vaccine.

It was also suggested that if you have not received your flu vaccine, that now is the time to do it as you must wait 14 days after receiving the flu vaccine before you may receive the COVID vaccine.

Tennessee Vaccinations Website: covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/eligibility

Schedule Vaccines in TN: signupgenius.com/go/nerwashington_prioritylist

Information may constantly be changing, so please visit websites for updates.