

# COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs

The following are the answers to frequently asked questions about the coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccine. This is not an all-inclusive FAQ page. Questions and answers will be update and added as needed.

## **When will the COVID-19 vaccine be available in New Mexico and Bernalillo County?**

This is not yet known. The State of New Mexico is working hard on planning to ensure that the state is ready to administer the vaccine or vaccines once they have been approved by scientific authorities because they are safe and effective. The first doses are due in the state the week of Dec. 14. However, there is likely to be only a very small number of doses shipped at first.

## **Will there be enough vaccine for everyone?**

There is a limited vaccine supply to begin. This means that not everyone will be able to be vaccinated right away. New Mexico, like most states, will provide vaccine to healthcare workers and others who are at high risk of being exposed to COVID-19 patients, such as first responders. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccine when large quantities are available. It is expected that several thousand vaccination providers and numerous locations throughout the state eventually will be available, including doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, and federally qualified health centers, when vaccine is widely available. The initial allocation plans for limited supplies of vaccine can be found in New Mexico's [Draft Plan](#).

## **What if you're not in a priority group, will the vaccine be available?**

Yes. Those who are not in the initial priority groups will be able to get COVID-19 vaccine as soon as large quantities are available.

## **Which vaccine will Bernalillo County get?**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Diseases Control (CDC), Homeland Security, and the State Department of Health are responsible for delivery of the vaccines, so New Mexico will receive whatever vaccine is determined appropriate for distribution in New Mexico. At this time, New Mexico and Bernalillo County are expecting delivery of the vaccine that is produced by Pfizer.

## **How many vaccinations are required?**

The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses spaced about three (3) weeks apart. Recommendations from the clinical studies indicated that receiving both doses leads toward a more successful immunization.

## **If there are two vaccinations required, how will notification for the second vaccination be issued?**

The New Mexico Department of Health uses the New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System (NMSIIS) to collect information on vaccine doses given within the state. NMSIIS has a feature that will send a reminder message on when to get a second dose. Vaccination providers may also send a reminder notice and issue a reminder card for the second shot.

## **If you're vaccinated, will you test positive for COVID-19?**

No. Vaccines won't cause a positive result on viral tests, which are used to see if a person has a current infection. If a person's body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility that person may test positive on some antibody tests. These tests indicate a previous infection and that there is some level of protection against the virus.

## **What are the side effects?**

Side effects are like those occurring with flu vaccine including pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, chills, joint pain and fever. These symptoms do not last more than a few days and are mild or moderate, sometimes requiring treatment with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. More information on the side effects of the specific vaccines should be available soon. For the Pfizer vaccine, studies thus far show around 2% of people vaccinated have headaches, 2% have a fever, and 3.8 % have fatigue.

## **Is a mask still needed after the first vaccination?**

Yes. The CDC recommends that during the pandemic people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside of their households, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.

## **How many days until masks aren't needed?**

A person's immune system needs to generate a response, so generally the protection from the virus starts after about seven days and continues to build. In the case of the Pfizer vaccine, which needs to be given in two doses, individuals are considered to have full immunity a week after the second dose.

### **Can kids get a vaccination and what ages will be allowed to get the vaccine?**

Recommendations are for individuals 16 years of age and older. Eventually everyone will be able to get a vaccine. For now, New Mexico and Bernalillo County will follow the priority list that is being developed by the FDA, the CDC, and the State Department of Health.

### **Is a COVID vaccination needed yearly, like a flu shot?**

That's unknown at this point as it's uncertain how long immunity lasts. It is possible booster doses will be needed. The CDC's guidance will be followed once more is known

### **Does the vaccine cost anything?**

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot to someone. 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's Provider Relief Fund.

### **If someone has COVID, can they still get the shot?**

There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this..

### **Where can people get a vaccination?**

Vaccination protocols are under development now and vaccination locations will be announced soon. Those locations and vaccination schedules will be posted on this site when they are available.

### **Additional Resources**

New Mexico Department of Health COVID-19 information:

<https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

General information from CDC about COVID-19 vaccines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

CDC information on a safety of all vaccines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>

Strategies for ensuring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>

Frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines from the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

Busting myths and misconceptions about COVID-19 Vaccination – information from the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines/vaccine-myths.html>

Information about vaccines under development

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/science/coronavirus-vaccine-tracker.html>

Eight (8) things to know about vaccine planning:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/8-things.html>