

## COVID-19 Vaccine Update:

One of the most common questions we hear from you is “when will I have access to the COVID-19 vaccine?” We know you are frustrated because there is not enough vaccine to meet demand, and information about eligibility and access keeps changing. We all want to get back to normal life, to run our businesses, to interact with our loved ones, and to share space with others like we used to.

We will be able to do that once many more Oregonians receive their vaccines. That process started in mid-December and so far more than 173,000 Oregonians have received their first of two doses. More than 25,000 of those doses went to people in Washington County. (See [OHA website](#) for updated numbers.)

Most people will be vaccinated by their own health care provider, a clinic or pharmacy. Health systems are planning large vaccination events, and counties are working with partners to make sure everyone has access once vaccine is available.

We want you to have the latest information, so we asked Washington County Public Health to answer your most common questions. This is current as of January 20, 2021.

### 1. When can I get the vaccine?

When you get the vaccine depends on your risk of being exposed to the virus and your risk of developing complications. Governor Kate Brown has prioritized healthcare workers, residents and employees of long-term care facilities and other congregate care settings, emergency responders, people with intellectual and physical disabilities and others at high risk. People in these Phase 1A groups started receiving vaccine in mid-December and right now are the only ones eligible for vaccine. To see if you qualify, look at [this list](#) from the Oregon Health Authority. There are 400,000 people in this group, more than the state’s current supply, so it will take a while for everyone in this phase to be vaccinated.

### 2. What if I’m not in Phase 1A, when will I be eligible for the vaccine?

The next phase of eligibility (1B) will begin on January 25 with childcare providers, early learning and K-12 educators and staff becoming eligible for the vaccine. On February 8, people 80 and older will be eligible, followed by people 75 and older, and then people 65 and older. See the Washington County vaccine page and [prioritization table](#) for more information.

### 3. How will all of these people be vaccinated when we don’t have enough vaccine?

That is a great question and one we’ve been asking too. **There is not enough vaccine to vaccinate everyone who is eligible, so while you may be eligible on a certain date according to the Governor’s schedule, you will not be able to get a vaccination until we have more supply.** The metro region’s large health care providers have been vaccinating their own employees, so have emergency responders, and other agencies that have signed up to provide vaccinations to people who are eligible in 1A. The health

systems are also vaccinating people in 1A at the Oregon Convention Center and will likely start vaccinating people in 1B on January 25.

#### **4. How do I sign up to get a vaccination?**

If you employ healthcare workers or others eligible for the vaccine in the 1A group, or if you are an individual in this group and are self-employed, you can fill out [this survey](#) and will be directed to a place to receive the vaccine. There is no system yet for educators and others in 1B to sign up for vaccine. Please watch your local news and keep checking the Washington County [vaccine page](#) for updates.

#### **5. What is Washington County's role in vaccination?**

The County's role is to ensure access to vaccine by everyone who wants it. The County does not have its own health clinics and is working with partners who are vaccinating people in 1A to make sure they have enough vaccine. This includes Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, Metro West, Neighborhood Health Center, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center and many others. The County is also preparing its Medical Reserve Corp to provide vaccinations during community events that will focus on Latinx and other communities of color as well as others who might have limited access due to homelessness or poverty.

#### **6. Is the vaccine safe and effective?**

Yes, [vaccination is the safest](#), most effective and most reliable way to keep yourself, your family and your community healthy and safe from COVID-19. Both vaccines require two doses given 3 to 4 weeks apart and are 95% effective. Both have undergone rigorous safety testing and have been approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration. You may experience [side effects](#) including flu like symptoms including a fever, pain, swelling and tiredness. These should subside after 24 hours and mean your body is building up immunity to the virus.

#### **7. When can we stop wearing masks and hug our friends and family again?**

Experts say that a large percentage of the adult population (70-90%) will need vaccination before we can stop wearing masks and start interacting like we did before the pandemic. The timeline for this to happen depends on availability of the vaccine and how many people get it. State health officials have said that it may take until fall of 2021 for all Oregonians who want the vaccine to get it.

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