

COVID-19 VACCINE



In the coming weeks, the first vaccine to help fight the COVID-19 Pandemic should begin to arrive. The CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have developed a prioritization schedule to help distribute the vaccine. Healthcare workers and long-term care residents are recommended to be first. Maniilaq and PHN will follow these guidelines and adapt them to the healthcare system within our region.

What we know so far:

1. We will probably be receiving either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. Both are similar and work through similar mechanisms.
2. We don't know how many doses we will receive.
3. Both vaccines are scheduled for two (2) doses -- first and second dose either three weeks, (Pfizer) or four weeks, (Moderna) apart.
4. Both have gone through rigorous FDA reviews and testing. No review steps have been skipped. The Phase 3 trials and manufacturing have been happening concurrently, thereby speeding up the process.

Possible benefits of getting the vaccine:

- Both vaccines appear to be about 90-95% effective. This means after both doses, you will probably be 90-95% less likely to get COVID-19, if you are exposed.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may protect people around you like your family, elders, and co-workers.
- COVID-19 can be a very serious infection, possibly causing life-threatening complications. To date, there is no way to know who will get these serious effects and who will not. The vaccine should lessen the likelihood of developing the disease and long lasting effects.
- Receiving the vaccine is a safer way to obtain immunity than by acquiring the virus that causes COVID-19 disease. The vaccine may also render longer term immunity than actually having the disease.
- The vaccine does NOT cause a mild form of COVID-19. The possible side effects of the vaccine are the body's way of developing immunity to the protein used in the vaccine. Live virus is not used in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

Information to consider:

- Possible side effects from the vaccine include fatigue, headache, joint pain, or chills after the first dose and fatigue, chills, headache, nausea, joint pain, or fever after the second dose. They have been showing up one to three days after vaccination, mainly with younger individuals, and they go away on their own.
- Some side effects can last up to six weeks.
- The vaccine has not been tested in the elderly, over 75 years of age, and therefore how this population will react is not well known.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not get the vaccine. This group was not within any of the test groups.
- Children under the age of 18 should not receive the vaccine at this time.

Healthy people, thriving communities.