

COVID-19 Vaccination Information FAQ



Will the COVID-19 vaccine help prevent me from getting COVID or spreading it?

That is the intent. Vaccines are a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them. Vaccines use your body's natural defenses to build resistance to specific infections and make your immune system stronger.

Vaccinations such as the COVID-19 vaccine train your immune system to create antibodies just like it does when it's exposed to any infection – granting immunity to the virus without ever being infected.

The vaccine has shown up to 90% effectiveness but we must continue to use every tool to stop this pandemic including vaccinations, hand washing, physically distancing and wearing a mask.

Does Singing River Health System endorse the vaccine for its employees, patients and community?

Singing River Health System fully supports and encourages all employees and patients to receive FDA approved vaccines. Large scale vaccination of our community is the best way to keep everyone safe and to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

How does it work?

The messenger RNA (mRNA) found in the COVID-19 vaccine stimulates your body's immune system to respond as if it were a true infection. The specifically designed mRNA teaches your cells how to mimic the viral proteins of COVID-19, triggering your immune system to create antibodies to fight it off.

If you are exposed to COVID-19 after receiving the vaccine, your body will automatically detect and destroy the virus before it causes illness. The vaccine will also minimize your risk of re-infection should you encounter or are exposed to the same virus again.

Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

The new mRNA technology in the COVID-19 vaccine does NOT use any live, dead, or weakened forms of viruses or bacteria to create antibodies. However, traditional vaccines that do contain strains of viruses do not cause the disease or put you at risk of its complications.

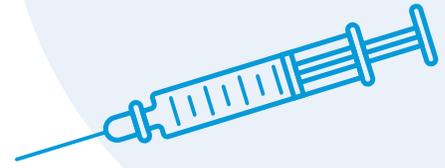
How many shots are required?

The COVID-19 vaccine will require one dose or two, depending on which vaccine you receive.

The two-dose vaccine will be given one dose at a time, after the first initial dose the individual will receive the second dose within 20-30 days after the first to ensure effectiveness. Just because some vaccines may have one shot or two, doesn't mean that one is less effective than the other.

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*What happens if I don't get the second shot within the allotted timeframe?
Will I still be considered vaccinated?*

To ensure optimal effectiveness, it is highly recommended that you receive the second dose within the specified timeframe as directed by the manufacturer. If you don't receive the second shot, you will greatly decrease the chance of the vaccine working.

How much will the vaccine cost?

There will be no cost to employees or patients at this time.

If I've already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. There is not enough information currently available to say how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again. In order to stop this pandemic, we need to use every tool available which includes immunization, social distancing, handwashing, and wearing masks.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is safe and side effects from the vaccine are minor and temporary, such as a sore arm or mild fever. Allergic reactions are very rare.

You are far more likely to be seriously injured by COVID-19 or any other vaccine-preventable disease than by its vaccine. The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks, and many more illnesses and deaths would occur without vaccines.

The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks of not being immunized.

Should I take a COVID test before or do I need to be COVID-free before receiving the vaccine?

You do not need to take a COVID-19 test prior to receiving the vaccine. If you are COVID-19 positive, then it is recommended that you follow the CDC guidelines and isolate for 10 days to limit exposure to others. Once you are out of isolation, you are able to receive the vaccine.

How long will the vaccine last?

Since this a novel virus, we are still unsure how long the vaccine antibodies will last. We are closely monitoring the research as more data becomes available.

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But the approval seems a bit rushed?

Even though the vaccine's approval process was ordered at "warp speed", before its release the FDA ensures any licensed vaccine is rigorously tested across multiple phases of trials before it is approved, including for emergency use. All vaccines are regularly reassessed once introduced and scientists are also constantly monitoring information from several sources for any sign that a vaccine may cause health risks.

"We are committed to expediting the development of COVID-19 vaccines, but not at the expense of sound science and decision making. We will not jeopardize the public's trust in our science-based, independent review of these or any vaccines. There's too much at stake."

*-Stephen M. Hahn, M.D., FDA Commissioner, and Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D.,
Director, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research*

When will the vaccine be available?

According to the MSDH, the first phase of vaccinations will be offered to health care workers who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure. Singing River will have received its first allocation of COVID-19 vaccines and begin offering vaccinations to front line team members on December 16th.

The next phase will be people who play a key role in keeping essential functions of society running and cannot socially distance in the workplace. This includes health care, emergency, and law enforcement personnel not included in the first phase, food packaging and distribution workers, teachers/school staff, childcare providers, and people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness – nursing home and assisted living residents, people with underlying medical conditions that are risk factors for severe COVID-19 illness and people 65 years of age or older.

Most likely in March 2021, once enough vaccines are produced to be available for the public, Singing River will offer COVID-19 vaccines at no cost in our medical clinics and will be able to hold vaccine events as we did for COVID tests and flu shots for anyone who wants one.