COVID-19: Vaccines

Over the past 18 months, COVID-19 has become a *world-wide pandemic which continues to spread and mutate.* **It is important to take every measure to protect yourself and others to slow the spread of the virus. It will be a** *team effort* **to stop the transmission of COVID-19.** *Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated can resume many activities they did prior to the pandemic.*

Controlling the Spread of COVID-19

Getting the COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection against the virus. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend the following:

- *Get vaccinated (ages 12 and up).*
- *Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.*
- *Wear a mask and stay away from others if sick.*
- *Report flu-like symptoms to your doctor and workplace.*

COVID-19 is still a threat to people who are unvaccinated. Even if you already had COVID-19, get vaccinated. Studies show vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19. Some people who get COVID-19 can become severely ill, which could result in hospitalization and death. Other people can have ongoing health problems several weeks (or longer) after infection. Even people who did not have symptoms when they were infected can have ongoing health problems.

Vaccine Facts

Information about the vaccines and COVID-19 is constantly changing, so be sure to check with your healthcare provider if you have questions. General information about vaccines, how they work, and what is currently available, is listed below.

SAFE. COVID-19 vaccines were developed using science that has been around for decades. COVID-19 vaccines are **not** experimental, having gone through all the required stages of clinical trials. Extensive testing and monitoring have shown that these vaccines are safe and effective. *COVID-19 vaccines have received and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.*

EFFECTIVE. COVID 19-vaccines are effective, and they can help keep you from getting and spreading the COVID-19 virus. COVID-19 vaccines can also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.

IMMUNITY. We don't know how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. But what we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for many people. If you get COVID-19, you risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick and could die. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19, so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

1) **Moderna.** Moderna is an mRNA vaccine (which means it doesn't contain a virus). It is approved for people 18 years and over. It requires two shots for full virus protection.

2) **Pfizer-BioNTech.** Pfizer is also another mRNA vaccine approved for people 16 years and over. It requires two shots for full virus protection.

3) **Johnson & Johnson-Janssen.** The J&J vaccine is a viral-vector vaccine which uses a modified version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to our cells. It is single-shot vaccine for people 18 years and older.

Vaccine Cost and Availability in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.)

There is no cost for the COVID-19 vaccines. Besides getting a shot through your county health department or your physician/healthcare provider, many retailers and pharmacies, such as **CVS-Target, Walgreen's, Walmart, Snyders,** and **Meijer,** offer vaccine shots by calling and making an appointment. Some offer walk in appointments. Visit the vaccine website to see which vaccines are available in your area: **www.vaccines.gov/search.**

In Michigan, answers to frequently asked questions can be found at **www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/** (information on the site is updated often). Or you can call the Michigan COVID-19 hotline at **888-535-6136.** *Call your regional county health department to see where you can get a COVID-19 vaccine in your area*.

UP Health Department	Counties Served	Phone Number
Marquette County Health Department	Marquette	906-475-9977
Western UP District Health Department	Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Ontonogon, & Gogebic	906-482-7382
Dickinson-Iron District Health Department	Dickinson & Iron	906-265-9913
Delta & Menominee Counties, Public Health	Delta & Menominee	906-786-4111
LMAS District Health Department	Alger, Luce, Mackinac, & Schoolcraft	906-293-5107
Chippewa County Health Department	Chippewa	906-635-1566

The Future of COVID-19 and Staying Healthy

Despite the progress with vaccines, everyone should continue to be careful. The world is still learning about this pandemic and how disease is spread among people. *The continued spreading of COVID-19 has led to variants, such as the current Delta variant, which spreads more easily than previous variants.* By continuing to practice strong personal hygiene (like washing hands, wearing masks indoors in places where infections are increasing, and continuing to social distance as necessary), you can help lower your risk of spreading COVID-19, keeping yourself and others safer.

REMEMBER: The best COVID-19 vaccine is the first one that is available to you. Do not wait for a specific brand. All currently authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and reduce your risk of severe illness.

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The CDC website has lots of information on new developments about the pandemic variants, vaccines, and information which is updates as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses.

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