

# IT'S GO TIME!

## COVID-19 vaccine update

It has been just short of one year since the first outbreak of the COVID-19 virus was announced in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019. And, in that time, over 330,000 people have died of the virus in the United States alone.

Also, in this monumental pandemic year, scientists have been working tirelessly to develop, test and get a vaccine approved for use against COVID-19. This is the moment we've been anticipating—and needing—to help restore our way of life and interaction to what we had become accustomed to.

*You have an important role to play.*

Just as we were all needed this past year to do our part to minimize the spread of the virus, we're needed now to step up and get vaccinated. **It's GO time!**

### The COVID-19 vaccine:

- Is the safest and most effective way for you to protect yourself from getting COVID-19.
- Helps protect you and others around you, especially those most at risk, like the elderly.
- Will help reduce the number of hospitalizations related to the virus—and the impact on our local healthcare system.
- May save your life.

*We're building a new timeline now...and tracking new statistics:*

Beginning on December 17, when we received our first shipment of the 975 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, we began counting the number of people vaccinated. A few days later, we received our second shipment. And, soon, we'll also receive the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, which was recently approved. We are SO excited to be able to protect our community from this virus—prevention is one of the best parts of our job as healthcare providers!

The opening day for COVID-19 vaccinations for healthcare workers at Goshen Health was booked full with 292 vaccine appointments. Among the first to receive the vaccination were doctors, nurses and therapists—Colleagues and providers who are directly responsible for the care of COVID-19 patients.

*"We are grateful healthcare workers were prioritized for first access. This virus can have serious, life-threatening complications. There is no way to know in advance how it will affect you, your friends or your loved ones. With a 95% effective rate, the vaccine is the safest way to build protection for all. Through the hard work of many people, we have an excellent vaccine that was made in record time without skipping any of the usual safety steps."*

—Dr. Dan Nafziger, Goshen Hospital Chief Medical Officer and Infectious Disease Specialist

### When can you get vaccinated?

Very soon! We expect to begin scheduling vaccinations for the community in just a few short weeks. Information will be shared on Facebook, on GoshenHealth.com and through the media.



## A few questions...and answers

### Who should get the vaccine?

Everyone **18 and older** who is not allergic to the vaccines or their components. The vaccines have not yet been studied thoroughly in pregnant women or in children, but pregnant women should discuss vaccination with their physician.

### Why should I get the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is our best chance at stopping the spread of illness from the COVID-19 virus. It is the single most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and others.

### I've already had COVID-19, do I need the vaccine?

Yes. Even if you have had COVID-19 previously, you are still encouraged to get vaccinated after you have recovered. According to immunologists, the vaccine will likely protect you longer than the antibodies after a COVID-19 infection.

### Are they effective?

All medications and vaccines must undergo a rigorous testing process, including the COVID-19 vaccine. In Pfizer's phase 3 trial with around 44,000 participants, their vaccine was proven to be effective in preventing the COVID-19 virus 95% of the time after the second dose. And the Moderna phase 3 trial had 30,000 participants and the vaccine was shown to be effective 94% of the time. Both were shown to have similar efficacy across age groups, genders, racial and ethnic groups, and people with medical conditions associated with a high risk of severe COVID-19.

### Are there side effects?

Much like the flu vaccine, most side effects happen in the first few days and may include fever, chills, fatigue, headache, muscle and joint pain and injection site soreness. These side effects may be experienced after each of the two doses.

### Are they safe?

The FDA has found no specific safety concerns with the vaccines. Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines went through the same scientific processes as other trials using all of the same tried and true safety protocols. The companies were able to save a lot of time by manufacturing the vaccines at the same time they were being studied. **Note:** You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

### Will Goshen Health be offering the COVID-19 vaccine?

**Yes!** In fact, the vaccine will be available to everyone free of charge whether you have insurance or not. Your insurance will be billed if you have coverage and there will be no amounts due from anyone receiving the vaccine.

### If you still have questions

- Talk to your primary care provider.
- Check out the Centers for Disease Control's website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

We do caution people not to rely too heavily on social media for answers to their questions. There is a lot of misinformation on Facebook and social media. So be sure your answers are coming from reputable sources.

*"Having a vaccine is monumental. Seeing our Colleagues coming in for their vaccinations is truly moving. COVID-19 vaccines are the safest way to keep people from getting sick. We are encouraging all of our Colleagues to get vaccinated – and we urge the community to follow suit as soon as it is publicly available."*

—Randy Christophel, President and CEO of Goshen Health

# IT'S GO TIME!

Check [GoshenHealth.com](https://www.goshenhealth.com) or our Facebook page for the latest information on when you can GO get vaccinated!