

December 30, 2020



Covid-19 Q & A Bulletin

As we begin our vaccination journey we continue to follow the guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS).

The following are questions posed to us this week by team members, residents and family members. We will post Q & A as we develop lists of questions. Feel free to visit www.cdc.gov for more information about the vaccines.

1. How long after I test positive can I get the vaccine? *Someone needs to be recovered from the virus to get the vaccine. From epidemiology - someone is recovered if they are 30 or more days post-virus, and no longer have any significant symptoms. Individuals who have had COVID-19 and have questions about vaccination should speak to their health care provider.*
 - a. For more information visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Long-Term-Care-Facility-Questions.aspx>
2. What if I had COVID-19 or I took a test that showed I have antibodies? Should I get the vaccine? *Yes, even if you have had COVID-19, it is safe to get the vaccine and this can add additional protection without causing any harm. If you have had a test that shows you have COVID-19 antibodies, you should still get the vaccine. It is safe and can increase your protection from future COVID-19 infections.*
 - a. For more facts about the vaccine visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html>
3. Is it mandatory? *No, at this time the vaccine is not mandatory for residents or team members. However, we believe that the greater the percentage of residents and team members being vaccinated the better our chances are to move towards life at St. Paul's as we knew it before Covid-19.*
4. I heard it can cause bell's palsy or other side effects? What are some of the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? Will the vaccine make me sick? *The vaccines currently being tested in clinical trials can cause short-term discomfort (such as headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever, and pain at injection site) in a percentage of the people who receive them. This is the effect of your body developing immunity. Clinical trial participants reported that the discomfort went away after a day, sometimes sooner. When you receive the second dose of the vaccine, the discomfort can be more pronounced. This is a normal reaction, so be prepared. If you experience discomfort after the first dose of the vaccine, it is very important that you still receive the second dose a few weeks later for the vaccine to be effective. This does not mean that the vaccine has given you COVID-19. Rather, this means that the vaccine is causing your body's immune system to react and create antibodies to fight off the virus. In other words, if you feel some discomfort, then the vaccine is doing its job! In some cases, a person may already be infected with COVID-19 when they get the vaccine but are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. If they later have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for it, it does not mean they got COVID-19 from the vaccine.*
 - a. For more information COVID-19 Vaccination Considerations for Persons with Underlying Medical Conditions visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/underlying-conditions.html>
5. Will I still need to wear a mask after receiving the vaccine? *Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using **all the tools** available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection*

from getting and spreading COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change recommendations on steps everyone should take to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

6. When are vaccines being given at St. Paul's? *January 13 and 14 and again February 3 and 4. Residents and team members receiving the vaccine must get both in order to develop immunity.*
7. Are those the only days the vaccinations are offered at this time? *Yes*
8. What is the hierarchy of vaccinations? *Much like the implementation of wearing PPE, screening and testing, the hierarchy of team members and residents receiving vaccinations is established by the CDC and the PA DOH and it is out of our control. Our hope is to vaccinate all residents and team members but we are taking directions from CVS Pharmacy, the company who is providing oversight of our vaccines. We will provide updates as we receive them.*
9. Who should not get vaccinated? *Adults of any age with **certain underlying medical conditions** are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to people with underlying medical conditions provided they have not had a severe allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine.*
 - a. *For more information about severe allergic reactions visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>*
 - b. *For more details about who should seek further medical advice about receiving the vaccine visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/underlying-conditions.html>*
10. Once vaccinated will residents and staff be able to move about the buildings? *Free movement about the buildings largely depends on a high percentage of residents and team members receiving the vaccine. We will be following the guidance from PA DOH, CDC and CMS post vaccinations. The number of people vaccinated will likely have an impact on that.*
11. Will family members have to be vaccinated before visiting? *We are unsure of the requirements at this time. We will follow the guidance issued by PA DOH, CDC and CMS.*
12. Is blood testing being done on residents to know if they have the antibodies – *No, blood testing is not being done.*
13. Are vaccinations the coronavirus – None of the [COVID-19 vaccines currently in development or in use in the United States](#), contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity. Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).
 - a. For more facts and benefits about the Covid-19 vaccine visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html>

For more information about the vaccine or answers to frequently asked questions visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

To ask a question please email Rita Clemente at rclemente@sp1867.org and we will include the answer in our next Q & A Bulletin.