



COVID-19 Vaccine

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q. Who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

A. Anyone 16 and older is now eligible to receive the vaccine. In Grundy County, the vaccine we are able to administer is for anyone 18 and older.

Q. What explains the quick development of the COVID-19 vaccine, when other vaccines have taken much longer to develop?

A. Vaccines are perhaps the best hope for ending the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the rapid development and approval of these vaccines may make you hesitant about safety or effectiveness. The emergency situation of a pandemic warranted an emergency response by the world's medical and scientific community, but this does not mean that safety protocols were skipped or that testing was not adequate. International collaboration of resources has occurred due to the widespread devastation of this pandemic. Many scientists and industries are focused on the same thing – and governments are relieving pharmaceutical companies from financial risk by providing the support to both develop and manufacture a vaccine product simultaneously. Prior experience with other coronavirus vaccines for illnesses such as SARS and MERS which were caused by similar viruses, helped make today's advanced timetable for the COVID-19 vaccine possible due to the research and development made with the earlier viruses. In addition to the safety review by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the nation's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has convened a panel of vaccine safety experts to independently evaluate the safety data from the clinical trials.

Q. What is herd immunity?

A. Herd immunity is a term used to describe when enough people have protection—either from previous infection or vaccination—that it is unlikely a virus or bacteria can spread and cause disease. As a result, everyone within the community is protected even if some people don't have any protection themselves. *Information obtained from: CDC.gov*

Q. How long will it take to provide vaccine to all of Iowa's eligible health care workers?

A. It's unknown how long the first phase of vaccine distribution to frontline health care workers will last. The next phase will expand vaccine availability to other essential workers and then high-risk patients. The length of the process depends on the availability of vaccine doses.

Q. When will a vaccine be more widely available?

A. Depending on which risk group an individual is assigned as well as the availability of vaccine, members of the public may be eligible for vaccines in the first months of 2021. The hospital and UnityPoint Health system want to be able to get the vaccine to our patients as quickly as possible. As production of the vaccines increases to the point of being widely available, we will be communicating with our patients and our communities.

Q. Is the necessary storage equipment available for the vaccine to be stored safely?

A. Throughout UnityPoint Health, there is the necessary equipment, including ultra-cold storage, for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Q. What explains the quick development of the COVID-19 vaccine, when other vaccines have taken much longer to develop?

A. The COVID-19 vaccine has passed the same steps of review by the federal Food & Drug Administration as any medication you've been prescribed. The FDA explains that the COVID-19 vaccine process was accelerated due...

More information specific to this question may be found at www.fda.gov/



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Q. When will the general public obtain herd immunity?

A. Experts do not know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease. Our goal here in Grundy County is to have at least 80 percent of all eligible people vaccinated.

Information obtained from: CDC.gov

Q. If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?

A. Yes. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Per CDC guidance, UnityPoint Health is **advising those who have tested positive for the virus within the past 90 days** to voluntarily wait to receive the vaccine until approximately 90 days following a COVID-19 diagnosis. This is to facilitate vaccination of those who are still susceptible to infection, as current evidence shows that risk for reinfection within 90 days is very low. In addition, people **should not** get the vaccine while quarantining after exposure to COVID-19 or if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.

Q. Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I am fully vaccinated?

A. Once you are fully vaccinated (two weeks past your second vaccine dose of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine; two weeks past your Johnson & Johnson vaccine) the CDC has updated its guidance to include more activities that may be done without a risk of becoming infected by the COVID-19 virus or infecting others. For example, fully vaccinated individuals are able to be without a mask in small group gatherings INDOORS or OUTDOORS with other fully vaccinated people. [Click here](#) for additional guidance from the CDC for fully vaccinated people.

Q. Should someone with allergies get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A. If you have severe anaphylaxis or an allergy to one of the ingredients of the COVID-19 vaccine, please talk to your health care provider. For most people, even those with seasonal allergies or minor food allergies, it is safe, and we highly recommend getting the vaccine.

Q. Can pregnant or nursing individuals receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

A. Yes. Even though pregnant and nursing individuals were excluded from clinical trials, and no information has been collected regarding the safety of the vaccine during pregnancy, they are eligible to receive the vaccine. That's because pregnant and nursing individuals are at increased risk of more severe COVID-19, with an increase in ICU admission and ventilator use when compared to nonpregnant individuals in the same age group. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend offering the COVID-19 vaccine to pregnant and lactating individuals, and our Women's Service Line supports this position. Since vaccination is a personal decision, we recommend pregnant individuals contact their provider to discuss their individual situation.