

## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

*Current as of Jan. 28, 2021. Info subject to change.*

<b>Who can receive the vaccine today?</b>	<p>Health care workers, residents of long-term care facilities, persons over 65.</p> <p>These are the groups that are first in line in California.</p> <p>It's important to note the supply of vaccine right now is limited and not keeping up with demand.</p> <p>If you are 65 or older, you can check with your usual health care provider to see if they have vaccine available.</p>
<b>Do I need to be a resident of San Mateo County?</b>	<p>Check with your usual health care provider.</p>
<b>Why can't everyone get a vaccine now?</b>	<p>The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as large quantities are available.</p> <p>However, vaccine supply is now limited.</p> <p>Because of this, the state has developed a priority list, which is <a href="#">outlined here</a>.</p> <p>Note: this phased approach depends on vaccine production and availability.</p>
<b>I'm in the first phase / I have a loved one in the first phase.</b> <b>How do I sign up / get an appointment?</b>	<p>Your first step is to call your normal health care provider.</p> <p>They should be able to help answer your questions.</p>
<b>How can I get notified when I'm eligible / it's my turn?</b>	<p>San Mateo County Health offers the opportunity to sign up to receive vaccine-related updates, including notification when you are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>You can find the sign up form at <a href="https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination">https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination</a></p>

	<p>This notification system is meant as an interim strategy as the State of California assembles a statewide Covid-19 vaccine notification system called MyTurn, which is scheduled to launch later in February.</p>
<p><b>How come the County isn't vaccinating residents?</b></p> <p><b>I heard the vaccine rollout is organized through states and counties.</b></p>	<p>County Health is providing vaccinations to eligible residents who are patients of San Mateo Medical Center's clinics, not insured elsewhere, or are otherwise on a priority list under state and federal vaccination guidelines.</p> <p>The County is also providing vaccine to local health care partners to ensure all eligible individuals and groups have fair access to the vaccine.</p>
<p><b>OK. Can you give me contact information for my health care provider?</b></p>	<p>Here in San Mateo County, the largest health care providers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaiser: 866-454-8855.</li> <li>• Sutter Health: 844-987-6115.</li> <li>• Stanford Health: 650-498-9000.</li> <li>• Blue Shield members are asked to go to <a href="https://blueshield.ca.com/coronavirus">blueshield.ca.com/coronavirus</a> for the latest information</li> <li>• If you are a veteran, please check with the Veterans Administration about your eligibility</li> </ul>
<p><b>I don't have health insurance. What do I do?</b></p>	<p>Insurance is available -- regardless of immigration status.</p> <p>Call 650-616-2002 to speak to an enrollment counselor.</p> <p>For residents without health insurance but who do have a health care provider (including patients at San Mateo Medical Center), please contact your health care provider.</p>

	Insurance is not required for you to receive the vaccine.
<b>I'm not on the current eligibility list. Who's next?</b>	<p>The state has announced it is moving to age-based tiers and that residents ages 65 and older are eligible.</p> <p>However, it's important to know that there is not enough vaccine to meet demand. Be sure to contact your normal health care provider for the latest eligibility information.</p> <p>As vaccine becomes more widely available, additional groups will be eligible. The following table provides details:</p>

Here are additional details from the state Department of Public Health:

## Phase 1A

**IN PROGRESS**

About 3 million people

- Healthcare workers
- Long-term care residents

See [CDPH Allocation Guidelines for Phase 1a](#)

## Phase 1B

**1B Tier One: WE ARE HERE**

About 8.5 million people

- Individuals 65 and older
- Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors:
  - Education and childcare
  - Emergency services
  - Food and agriculture

**1B Tier Two:**

- Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors:
  - Transportation and logistics
  - Industrial, commercial, residential, and sheltering facilities and services
  - Critical manufacturing
- Congregate settings with outbreak risk:
  - Incarcerated
  - Homeless

## Phase 1C

- Individuals 50 -64 years of age
- People 16-49 years of age who have an underlying health condition or disability which increases their risk of severe COVID-19
- Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors:
  - Water and wastewater
  - Defense
  - Energy
  - Chemical and hazardous materials
  - Communications and IT
  - Financial services
  - Government operations / community-based essential functions

<p><b>When can the general public – that is anyone of any age without restrictions or preexisting health conditions – get the vaccine?</b></p>	<p>The state says the COVID-19 vaccine will be available to everyone in California who wants it.</p> <p>Due to limitations, this might not be for at least several months.</p> <p>In the meantime, everyone is urged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a face covering</li> <li>• engage in social distancing</li> <li>• wash hands often</li> <li>• follow all state and local health orders and guidelines.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I want to know more about the County’s vaccination plan. Where do I find it?</b></p>	<p>Please go to: <a href="https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination">https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination</a></p> <p>This page includes details about the County’s commitment to the equitable distribution of vaccine.</p>
<p><b>How many people have been vaccinated in San Mateo County?</b></p>	<p>County Health updates a dashboard available at <a href="https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus-health-data">https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus-health-data</a></p>
<p><b>Why should I get the vaccine?</b></p>	<p>COVID-19 vaccines are meant to prevent you from getting COVID-19. The ability of COVID-19 vaccines to protect us from spreading the virus to others is not yet known but is being studied carefully.</p>
<p><b>Are there certain groups that should not get the COVID-19 vaccine?</b></p>	<p>Yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to the first dose should not get the second dose.</li> <li>• Children under 16, at this time. Only the Pfizer vaccine is approved for use in teens 16 to 17 years. Moderna is approved for ages 18 and older. Clinical</li> </ul>

	<p>trials are currently being conducted for children and more information will be available later.</p> <p>According to the CDC, you should talk with a doctor first before getting a COVID-19 shot if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have severe allergies or carry an epinephrine (Epi-Pen, Auvi-Q, etc.) injector</li> <li>• Have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injections</li> <li>• Are immunocompromised, such as if you are HIV-positive</li> <li>• Have a moderate to severe illness or are feeling sick (in which case, you should likely wait to get vaccinated)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Can pregnant or breastfeeding women be vaccinated against COVID-19?</b></p>	<p>Yes. Pregnant women have a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 disease. There are no study results available yet on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women. However, experts believe that the vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to the woman or the fetus.</p> <p>Pregnant women can talk with a doctor about their risk of COVID-19 disease and how they might benefit from vaccination.</p>
<p><b>I hear there are two types of vaccines. Do I get to choose which vaccine I get?</b></p>	<p>No. Both available vaccines—Modern and Pfizer—have been approved for use by the FDA . (California formed a <a href="#">Scientific Safety Review Workgroup</a> of experts to ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. This workgroup has confirmed that the COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA are safe and effective.) Inventory of vaccines will be distributed based on how the provider can store the vaccine. At some sites, only one type of vaccine may be available. You can check with your healthcare provider on which vaccine they are using when the time comes. Your course of two doses should both be of the same vaccine.</p>

<p><b>How much will the COVID-19 vaccine cost?</b></p>	<p>No cost to you. COVID-19 vaccines, including their administration, are free. If any person or organization tries to charge you for a vaccine, contact the District Attorney.</p>
<p><b>Do I need to be a San Mateo County resident or even a California resident to get a COVID-19 vaccine?</b></p>	<p>No. Vaccine distribution is based on eligibility irrespective of residency or immigration status.</p>
<p><b>How many COVID-19 vaccine shots are needed?</b></p>	<p>Two doses for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, 21 days apart Two doses for the Moderna vaccine, 28 days apart.</p>
<p><b>I've had COVID-19. Should I still get a vaccine?</b></p>	<p>Yes. At this time, we do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>Is the vaccine safe?</b></p>	<p>COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA have been shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials.</p>
<p><b>What should I expect after getting vaccinated?</b></p>	<p>Vaccines help our immune system fight infections in the future. COVID-19 vaccines will protect us from the virus that causes COVID-19 without having to get the illness.</p> <p>It typically takes a few weeks after the last dose in a series for you to become fully protected. On the days after taking the vaccine, you may have a sore arm, aches, fatigue or fever, but these are not harmful. These symptoms signal that your immune system is developing protection from the virus.</p>
<p><b>How effective are the vaccines?</b></p>	<p>The first two vaccines available have shown 94% efficacy against a person becoming ill with COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>Does being vaccinated mean I can visit my loved ones and friends without risking our health?</b></p>	<p>Even with a vaccine you may still be able to spread COVID-19. Even after vaccination, you should continue to follow all of the guidelines from the State and the County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home as much as possible</li> <li>Self-isolate if you're sick or have been exposed to COVID-19</li> <li>Wear a mask</li> <li>Wash your hands frequently</li> <li>Keep your distance from people not in your household</li> </ul>

**Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain coronavirus and cannot give you COVID-19.