

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: January 8, 2021

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) has released the following estimated timeline for vaccine distribution.

These times are subject to change due to vaccine supply or other unforeseen circumstances.

Phase One vaccinations have begun and are expected to be completed by February.

Phase Two vaccinations are scheduled to begin in February and continue through April.

Phase Three vaccinations are scheduled to begin in April and continue through June and beyond to reach everyone who wishes to be vaccinated.

Please refer to the graphic at bit.ly/35h1fDC from MA DPH to learn when you can expect to be vaccinated.

The Governor and his health officials are guiding the distribution and this schedule of vaccinations.

Martha's Vineyard Hospital is working diligently with the Island's health care community and the hospital will provide additional information when it is available from the state.

Additional information resources include [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) and the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov).

Martha's Vineyard-Specific Information

What is the island distribution plan?

We outline these plans below with an understanding that it is dependent on guidance from the state and the availability of the vaccine. We are working closely with the Mass General Brigham system too.

So far, the supply flow has been as we expected.

As of Wednesday, January 6th, we have vaccinated 292 employees at the hospital, and our system is running smoothly. As you know, per guidance from the state, hospital employees are being vaccinated now.

And under the federal government program, CVS will be administering the vaccine to our residents and staff at Windemere. The first dose at Windemere is scheduled for January 12th and the second is scheduled for February 2nd.

Next week, the hospital will be administering the vaccine for the Island's first responders. We have received that shipment of vaccine and we will be ready to go. That group will include police, fire, and EMS workers. We want to thank the first responders in advance for their cooperation in this process.

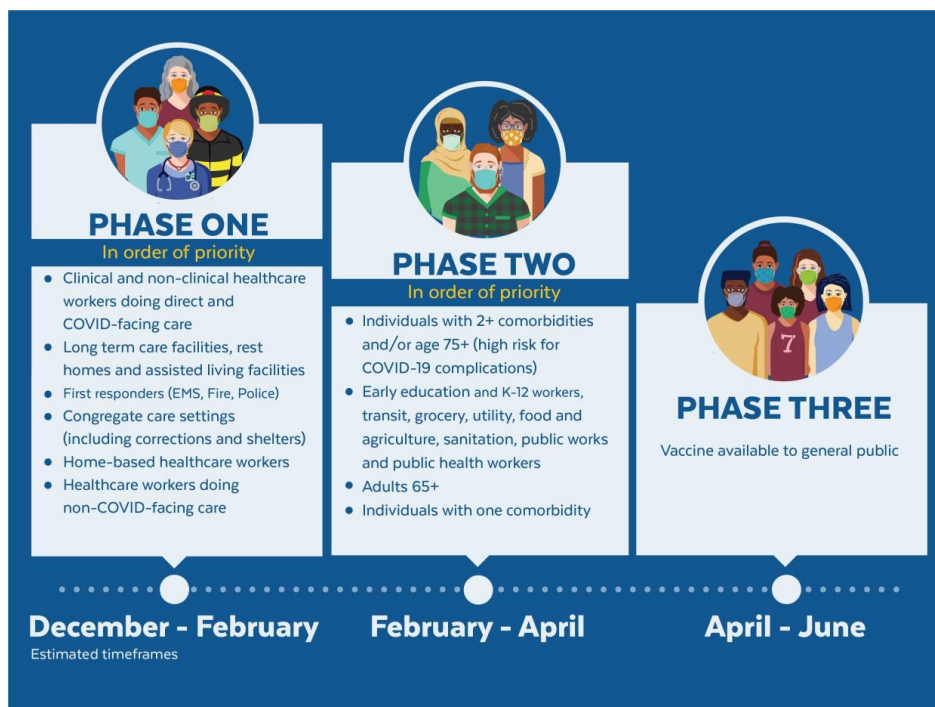
We will hold a clinic to administer the vaccine for first responders on January 15th, 16th, and 19th.

As far a timeline is concerned for the continued rollout of the vaccine, we have included the graphic on the right provided by the state Department of Public Health.

This is our best guidance to date.

We are working closely with the Island Boards of Health to develop a distribution plan as we learn more about the vaccine rollout from government leaders.

Please note that at the bottom of the graphic it says: "Estimated Timeframes"



I'm a community healthcare provider identified in phase one. When and how can I get my vaccine?

Please reach out to Kathleen Samways (ksamways@ihimv.org) of Island Health Care who is working to compile a list of community healthcare provider names and numbers. We expect to receive information from the DPH regarding our vaccine allotment for this group soon. Those added to the community healthcare provider list will be notified when the allotment becomes available and when they can expect to receive their vaccine.

General Information

When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Mass General Brigham is following guidance from public health officials. The first wave of people who can get the vaccine are frontline health care workers. Patients in long-term care facilities and nursing homes can also get the vaccine.

When will the vaccine be available to the general public?

Currently, Massachusetts public health officials think the general public will be able to get the vaccine sometime between April and June 2021. Access will be coordinated through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

If you are high risk, are 65 and older, or work in certain jobs like education, transit or public works, you might be able to receive the vaccine sooner, between February and April. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has more information on their web site about who is high risk for severe illness and about when the vaccine may be available to the general public.

Can children get the vaccine?

Currently, the Pfizer vaccine is approved for children ages 16 and older. The Moderna vaccine is not approved for children. It is approved for adults aged 18 and older.

How do we know the vaccine works?

The COVID-19 vaccine has proven to be extremely effective. According to Phase 3 trials, the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective 7 days after the second dose. The Moderna vaccine is 94% effective 14 days after the second dose. These results were consistent across gender, age, race and ethnicity.

How long will immunity last after I get vaccinated? Will I need to be vaccinated every year?

We do not know this yet. The clinical trials will continue to monitor participants to see how long protection lasts. We will provide updated information as it becomes available. Because we don't yet know how long immunity will last, it's still important to wash your hands, wear a mask, and socially distance.

Can we stop wearing masks and social distancing after getting vaccinated?

No, not yet. We know that the vaccine protects you from getting sick, but we do not know if it stops you from giving it to other people. Since not everyone will get the vaccine right away, we must be careful to protect others. Even if you get the vaccine, you should still wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands. Infection control experts will let us know when it is safe to modify or stop these safety measures.

Why do we need to get the vaccine if we're wearing masks and social distancing?

We need to use all the tools available to us to stop the pandemic. Together, the COVID-19 vaccine and simple everyday actions like wearing a mask and social distancing will offer the best protection from COVID-19. And even though the vaccines are 90% to 95% effective, you still don't know how effective it will be for you. About 5% to 10% of people immunized may still get the virus. You should do everything you can to reduce your risk of getting the virus and passing it to others.

Can people get COVID-19 from a vaccine?

No. The vaccine does not contain the whole or live virus and therefore cannot cause COVID-19.

I already had COVID-19. Should I get vaccinated?

Yes, when it becomes available to you, you can still get the vaccine if you have had COVID-19 and have recovered. If you are actively sick with COVID-19 or have symptoms that could be from COVID-19, you should not get the vaccine.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Some people do get side effects after receiving the vaccine. For both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, most mild side effects resolve within a day or so.

- The most commonly reported symptoms from the Pfizer vaccine have been pain at the site of vaccination, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, and chills.
- The most commonly reported symptoms from the Moderna vaccine have been pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, swollen lymph nodes in the same arm as the injection, nausea and vomiting, and fever.

How many shots is the COVID-19 vaccine?

Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being developed require two shots, including the two currently in use- Pfizer and Moderna.

Is there a cost associated with getting the COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccine doses will be provided to people at no cost. However, vaccination providers may charge an administration fee for giving the shot to an individual. This cost is covered by an individual's public or private insurance company or by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund for those without insurance.

Where can I find more information?

- Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>
- When vaccine is limited, who gets vaccinated first? - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations.html>
- COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts - <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts>
- People at higher risk for severe illness - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#People-at-Higher-Risk-for-Severe-Illness>
- Food and Drug administration Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine - <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine>
- Food and Drug administration Moderna COVID-19 vaccine - <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>
- Mass General Brigham COVID-19 website - <https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org/covid19>