

# COVID-19 Vaccines for the Stockbridge-Munsee Community



The content below was developed on December 7, 2020 based on the most-up-to-date information available. It was reviewed and approved by our medical team. If you have *any* specific questions about whether or not you should get the vaccine, please contact the Stockbridge-Munsee Health and Wellness Center *now* at 715-793-5087. Providers can answer your questions, so you are prepared when the vaccine becomes available, which may be soon.

## How many COVID-19 vaccines are there?

In the U.S. there are several vaccines under development. However, vaccines must qualify for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. Only those that qualify can move on to the American Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which will meet to set the guidelines on who should receive the vaccine. Once *both* the FDA and the ACIP have given their approval of a vaccine and guidelines have been set, that vaccine can be distributed.

## Which vaccines are closest to being available?

Two vaccines – produced by Pfizer and Moderna – are closest to being available. Large studies of these two vaccines have been completed.

## How many doses are needed and how far apart?

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines both require 2 doses. The Pfizer vaccine doses are given 21 days apart. The Moderna vaccine doses are given 28 days apart.

## How effective are these vaccines?

Results of studies of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines show that the vaccines decreased the risk of getting sick with COVID-19 by about 95%. (That is very good!). The vaccine was equally effective across all age, gender, and race/ethnicity groups.

## What are the side effects of these vaccines?

In the Pfizer and Moderna studies, the most common side effects included soreness, redness, or swelling around the injection site, fatigue, body aches, or headache. These are similar side effects to the flu shot. There were no serious adverse events.

## Are the vaccines safe?

There were no serious adverse side effects reported in the ~75,000 participants in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine studies. (That is very good!).

So, even if you are one of the first people to get the vaccine in our community, there have been *thousands* of generous people who have been a part of testing the vaccine before it came to us. I hope that makes everyone more confident about the vaccine. It certainly makes us feel confident about offering it to our community members.

Safety of these vaccines will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. There will be a special vaccine monitoring system put into place just for the COVID vaccines called V-Safe that will be an app on a phone to report any issues with the vaccine in real time. There will also be ongoing safety surveillance for COVID vaccines through the CDC's Vaccine Safety Datalink.

### **Can the vaccines cause COVID-19? How do they work?**

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain whole virus, so they cannot cause COVID-19. The vaccines consist of small chopped up parts of the virus. When your body sees these small parts of the virus, it makes fighter anti-bodies that attack COVID if it gets in your system later. These little fighters hide until they need to help you out.

### **When will the vaccine be available for us?**

Once one or both of these vaccines are approved and guidelines are set, we expect to receive the first shipments a little before or a little after Christmas. But we don't know for certain yet when the vaccines will arrive. We do know that we will have very limited supplies at first.

### **How will we decide who gets the vaccine first?**

Healthcare workers, essential workers, Elders, and those who are at high risk for getting sick from COVID will be initially prioritized for vaccination. The specifics of the vaccine distribution process are being developed. We will keep everyone updated about this as best we can.

### **Will I have to pay for the vaccine?**

No, at this time all of the doses are being purchased by the U.S. government. Your insurance carrier may be billed for the administration fee, but you will not have to pay out of pocket.

### **Will the vaccine be mandatory for tribal employees?**

At this time, we are not making the COVID vaccine mandatory for tribal employees. We encourage our employees to receive the vaccination to protect our families, fellow staff, and patients and to increase the likelihood that we all stay healthy.

### **I am not sure if I should get the vaccine, who should I contact?**

We know a COVID vaccine is on the way! If you have questions about whether or not you should get the vaccine, please contact the Stockbridge-Munsee Health and Wellness Center *now* at 715-793-5087. Our providers can help answer your questions, so you are prepared when the vaccine becomes available, which may be very soon!

### **What should I do if I have questions about COVID-19?**

Call the COVID-19 Community Helpline at 1-833-679-0136. This toll-free helpline is for Stockbridge-Munsee community members who have general questions about COVID-19 services or guidelines but aren't sure who to ask. The helpline is staffed M-F during normal business hours. When you call, a Stockbridge-Munsee staff person will respond to your concerns and direct you to the appropriate contact. Because this helpline is not monitored 24/7, if it's an emergency or you are in crisis, call 911.

