



COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Covia strongly encourages all team members to participate in the COVID-19 vaccination clinics taking place at our communities. We understand that some people may have concerns about the vaccine or may have an underlying condition (such as an allergy) that may prevent them from getting vaccinated at this time.

You have the right to decline being vaccinated. However, if you choose not to get vaccinated:

- You may be required to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE).
- You may be required to do additional screening when you report to work.
- You may be asked to take on roles that do not interact with others.
- You may be required to take additional precautions before reporting to work or as part of your job.

Here are some things to know about the COVID-19 vaccines:

The COVID-19 vaccines went through robust clinical trials. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines went through three phases of testing before being presented for emergency use by the FDA. Although they did not take as long as the usual clinical trials, the vaccines received the same level of testing as any other treatment or medication.

People of all ages and ethnicities participated in the clinical trials. For the Pfizer - BioNTech vaccine (which is what most of our communities are receiving), 6% of phase 3 trial participants were Asian; 10% were Black; 13% were Hispanic/Latinx; and 1.3% were Native American. Almost 18,000 of the over 45,000 participants were over the age of 55.

The COVID-19 vaccines do not include any active COVID-19 virus. This type of vaccine uses what is called a messenger RNA, or mRNA. In very simple terms, the “messenger” tells your cells to look out for anything that comes into your body that has the same genetic code as the mRNA, so your body is warned in advance to prepare protein materials that will defend you against the COVID-19 virus if it appears.

The COVID-19 vaccines are ~95% effective. Pfizer BioNTech reported that their vaccine was 95% effective in clinical trials. Moderna reports a vaccine efficacy of 94.1%.

Side effects of the vaccines are minor. Similar to a flu shot, primary side effects include soreness or swelling at the injection site, fatigue, headache, or flu-like symptoms. Those who have received the vaccine in our communities so far have not reported any problems. People who may have an allergic reaction to the vaccine are advised not to take it at this time in case of anaphylactic shock, but otherwise, there appear to be no serious side effects. According to a Reuters fact check, rumors that people died during the Pfizer vaccine trials are misleading. “Six people did die during the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine trials, but only two of them were given the vaccine. The other four were given a safe placebo solution of salt and water. *No causal relationship was established between the vaccine and the two deaths*, which occurred in line with the normal death rate for the general population.”¹ (Emphasis added.)

The vaccines take about a month to be fully effective. The vaccines have been found to be more effective when administered 21 days apart (for the Pfizer vaccine) or 28 days apart (for the Moderna vaccine). After the vaccine is administered, it takes about a week for it to be fully effective.

Public health precautions will still be in place until most of the population has been vaccinated. We will not achieve “herd immunity” until about 70-80% of the population has been vaccinated. Although the vaccination is a great step forward, we will not be out of the pandemic until many more people outside of our communities also get vaccinated.

For more information on the Pfizer - BioNTech vaccine, visit
<https://www.pfizer.com/science/coronavirus/vaccine> (in English)
<https://www.pfizer.com/science/coronavirus/vacuna> (en Español)

Dr. Timothy Gieseke, who served as the medical director at Spring Lake Village for many years, shared his perspective on the COVID-19 vaccines in an interview you can watch on YouTube: https://youtu.be/AsIzrmPtb_s

If you have other questions or concerns you would like answered before receiving the vaccine, please talk to your Medical Director, Health Care Administrator, Executive Director, or Housing Administrator, or send your question to the COVID-19 Task Force at C19info@covia.org.

¹ Fact check: Clarifying claims around Pfizer vaccine deaths and side effects
<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-pfizer-health-concerns/fact-check-clarifying-claims-around-pfizer-vaccine-deaths-and-side-effects-idUSKBN28K2R6>