

Middlesex County COVID-19 Vaccine Talking Points

For the most up-to-date COVID-19 information in Middlesex County including scheduling for vaccines and testing, case numbers, health information, helpful resources, and more, please visit www.middlesexcountynj.gov/covid19

People who cannot register online, or have more detailed questions, can be directed to our Call Center at 732-745-3100.

Middlesex County is looking for volunteers to assist with COVID-19 vaccination in medical and non-medical roles. For more information, please visit www.middlesexcountynj.gov/covid19

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout – Overview, Phasing, and Scheduling

- The State of New Jersey has begun to roll out COVID-19 vaccines in a [phased approach](#) to all adults who live, work, or are being educated in the State.
 - Currently vaccines are available to the following groups;
 - Healthcare Personnel (Phase 1A)
 - Long-Term Care Residents and Staff (Phase 1A)
 - First Responders (Phase 1B)
 - Individuals at High Risk (Phase 1B)
 - Individuals ages 65 and older (Phase 1B)
 - Individuals aged 16 – 65 with certain medical conditions (Phase 1B)
 - Future Phases will include:
 - Additional frontline essential workers (Phase 1B)
 - Other essential workers (Phase 1C)
 - General population (Phase 2)
 - The list of those eligible to receive the vaccine [is being continuously updated](#).
 - *As per the State of New Jersey, please note: Vaccination phases are tentative and subject to change. The movement between vaccination eligibility phases may be fluid. One phase may overlap with another. Not all individuals in each phase will be vaccinated before opening to additional groups, and not all groups within a specific phase will be made eligible to receive the vaccine at the same time.*
- Vaccinations began on December 15, 2020 in New Jersey Hospitals for paid and unpaid persons serving in their health facilities.
- As of December 30, 2020 through the [Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program](#) with CVS and Walgreens, New Jersey has over 500 long-term care facilities scheduled - including the State's three veterans memorial homes - and over 100,000 residents and staff slated to receive vaccinations through the beginning of February 2021.
 - After nursing home residents and staff are vaccinated, CVS and Walgreens will begin to vaccinate thousands of residents and staff in other congregate settings including Assisted Living facilities, the five state developmental centers, federal housing for seniors and group homes and other long-term residential facilities. New Jersey also has a network of community vaccination sites for vulnerable residents who live in congregate settings not eligible for this federal partnership.
- In January 2021, New Jersey launched its statewide vaccine scheduling system, the [New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System \(NJVSS\)](#), to help all potential vaccine recipients identify nearby vaccine distribution sites and schedule an appointment. **All residents should pre-register to receive the vaccine through this scheduling system.**

COVID-19 Vaccine Supply Chain

- The State places direct orders with the Federal Government, and the State receives an amount at the discretion of the federal government; which is then subsequently subdivided and distributed by the State.
- Number of Doses Received by County: 4,000 through January 14, 2021
- Number of Doses Administered by County: 3,000 through January 14, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout – Megasites

- There are six state coordinated “Megasites” in New Jersey which will immediately be in position to vaccinate front-line healthcare workers and then continue vaccinations in accordance with the State Phasing, dependent upon the supply of vaccine to New Jersey.
- Middlesex County in partnership with the State of New Jersey and RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) is operating a COVID-19 vaccine mega-site in **Edison Township at the [New Jersey Convention & Exposition Center](#)** to administer up to 2,400 vaccine doses per day to qualified individuals as per the [State’s phasing plan](#).
 - The Middlesex County Megasite will be open Monday through Friday from 8am-4pm and is located at 97 Sunfield Ave, Edison, NJ 08837.
 - RWJBH professionals and County personnel will be on-site to provide services from registration to vaccination.

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout – County Program

- Middlesex County is currently accepting appointments for those wishing to be vaccinated. Those wishing to be vaccinated will be required to make an appointment and meet a set of criteria. Currently, those who are within an eligible phase and wishing to make an appointment should register at www.middlesexcountynj.gov/covid19, print out the required documents, and receive a time to report to the vaccination site.
 - Due to the limited number of vaccines available each day, reservations are given on a first-come, first-serve basis and are not rebooked for cancellations or no shows.
 - Registrants of the vaccine will not have the option to select the vaccine-maker of their choice, vaccines are strictly predicated on supply provided by the federal government.
 - As the County receives additional vaccine, we will continue with our vaccination campaign for eligible persons on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Middlesex County Fire Academy.
 - Due to the limited amount of vaccine received by the County, it is strongly encouraged that all residents pre-register through the [New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System \(NJVSS\)](#). County and State officials are working closely to fully integrate the County and State systems so that the user experience is seamless.
- As additional vaccine is received, the County program will expand to include six additional sites geographically distributed across Middlesex County.
- The County is also evaluating the use of mobile units to establish mobile vaccination clinics.
- All County Sites will adhere to the State Phasing system and augment the existing State and Federal distribution methods described above.

COVID-19 Vaccine Background Information

- COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection.
- Both the [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna](#) vaccines are messenger [RNA vaccines \(mRNA\)](#), which **when injected instruct our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies.** That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.
- COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized for use have gone through clinical trials involving tens of thousands of participants to determine their [safety and efficacy](#). Clinical trials of all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines. **The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).**
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. However, experts don't know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. [COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you](#) by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.
- Both vaccines are given as an injection into the muscle and as a series of two shots. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is two doses given 21 days apart and the Moderna vaccine is two doses given 28 days apart.
- COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19. **None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development use the live virus that causes COVID-19.**
- **COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests.** Vaccines won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.
- [After receiving an injection](#) of a COVID-19 vaccine, you will be observed for 15 minutes by healthcare staff to monitor any side effects. Observation may be longer (30 minutes) if you have a history of anaphylaxis.
 - Like many vaccines, a COVID-19 vaccine may cause some temporary discomfort. In addition to a sore arm, side effects of the vaccines may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, injection site swelling, injection site redness, nausea, feeling unwell, and swollen lymph nodes.
- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, **but these measures are not enough.** Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often. **The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.**