

## TALKING POINTS

### COVID-19 Vaccinations Coming Soon for People Experiencing Homelessness

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#### Introduction

The Commission on Homelessness is coordinating with the City of Evansville and the Vanderburgh County Health Department to administer the COVID-19 vaccination to homeless service agency staff and local residents experiencing homelessness. While the details of how and when the vaccines will be administered are being developed, we ask you use the following information to talk with your staff and clients during the point-in-time count about getting the vaccine.

#### 3 Key Messages to Share

**It is safe.**

The Moderna vaccine, which will soon be available for homeless service agency staff and local residents experiencing homelessness, was clinically tested by 15,000 people and approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration. The clinical study used a very diverse patient population, which was very similar to the diversity of the United States population, to test the vaccine. *(Source: United States Food and Drug Administration)*

**It is effective.**

In the clinical trial, the Moderna vaccine was found to have nearly 95% efficacy two weeks after the second dose. Additionally, the vaccine was found to be effective across age groups, genders, racial and ethnic groups, and participants with medical comorbidities. This vaccination will protect you from the new variant of the COVID-19 strain. *(Sources: United States Food and Drug Administration, Deaconess)*

**It won't give you COVID-19.**

Contrary to what you may read on social media and non-credible websites, the vaccine will not give you COVID-19, alter your DNA nor cause women to become sterile. You will not be injected with the live virus. In fact, the vaccine uses a genetic code to help your immune system create antibodies to fight off potential infection. *(Source: Deaconess)*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Which vaccine will residents in Evansville and Vanderburgh County receive?**

The Moderna vaccine will be available for Evansville and Vanderburgh County residents. This allows for more flexibility in storing and administering the vaccine because the Moderna vaccine does not require the extreme refrigeration temperatures like the Pfizer vaccine.  
Source: Vanderburgh County Health Department

### **How is the Moderna vaccine administered?**

The Moderna vaccine is administered into the muscle as a series of two doses, given 28 days apart.  
Source: United States Food and Drug Administration

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

No. The vaccine is free.  
Source: Vanderburgh County Health Department

### **Why do I need a second dose?**

The number of antibodies produced after the second vaccination dramatically increases compared to receiving only a single dose. While a single dose certainly offers you some protection, the second dose is expected to offer significantly longer protection.  
Source: Deaconess

### **The Moderna vaccine has a nearly 95% efficacy rate. What does efficacy mean and is that the same as effectiveness?**

Efficacy is how much a vaccine prevents disease, and possibly also transmission, under ideal and controlled circumstances. This number compares the results of the vaccinated group with a placebo group in a clinical study. Effectiveness is how well the vaccine performs in the real world.  
Source: Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

### **What are the side effects of the vaccine?**

The most common side effects of the Moderna vaccine are similar to the flu vaccine: headache, fatigue, fever, muscle aches, joint pain and pain at the site of the injection. While these may be uncomfortable side effects, you can use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to manage these reactions. Deaconess points out these are merely signs of your immune system responding to the vaccine versus actual side effects.

Additionally, three patients in Moderna's clinical trial of the 15,000 individuals who received the vaccine experienced Bell's palsy. According to the Mayo Clinic, Bell's palsy is a sudden weakness in the muscles in your face where one half of your face appears to droop. For most people, Bell's palsy is temporary and recovery may take up to six months.  
Sources: Deaconess, Mayo Clinic

### **Should I get the vaccine if I have an egg allergy?**

According to Deaconess, the Moderna vaccine does not require the use of eggs or any other cells in the production or manufacturing process. Residents with egg allergies should not be concerned about allergic reactions to the vaccine.

Source: Deaconess

### **How can this vaccine be safe when most vaccinations take years to be developed and approved by the FDA?**

The root of the answer has everything to do with the attention and resources dedicated to COVID-19 response and the availability of mRNA technology. Below are the various factors that led to an expedited development and approval process.

- After the virus sequence was published in January 2020, an mRNA, which is a genetic sequence that provides the blueprint for something to be developed in a cell, was produced within one week.
- mRNA technology for vaccines already exists, and is much easier to produce than other types of vaccines.
- Many people volunteered to participate in clinical trials, which allowed them to be started quickly.
- The federal government made substantial financial and labor commitments to prioritize the vaccine for COVID-19 over other diseases and accelerate the process.

Source: Deaconess

### **Can I stop wearing a mask and social distancing after I get the vaccine?**

While the vaccine will drastically decrease your chances of potential infection, all residents will be asked to wear a mask, social distance and practice good hygiene.  
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### **Should I get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?**

While it is unknown at this time if people who have tested positive for COVID-19 need to be vaccinated, the Indiana Department of Health currently recommends previously-infected individuals should wait at least three months after being diagnosed with COVID-19 to be vaccinated.  
Source: Deaconess

### **Will I be microchipped as a result of being vaccinated?**

No. You will not be microchipped as a result of being vaccinated.  
Source: Reuters

### **Will the Moderna vaccine protect against the new, more contagious variant of COVID-19?**

At this point, experts believe the Moderna vaccine will protect you from the new COVID-19 variant.  
Source: Washington Post

### **If I receive the first dose of the Moderna vaccine, can I get the second dose using the Pfizer vaccine?**

It is unknown if mixing the vaccines is effective. Thus, it is recommended you should get two doses of the same vaccine.  
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention