ROWAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
COVID-19 VACCINE Q&A

ROWAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
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Currently there are two prospective COVID-19 vaccines, which are now under the review by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Once approved by the FDA, hospitals will receive the first doses for their staff. After that, we are anticipating an initial shipment of COVID-19 Vaccine to Rowan County Public Health in January. These first shipments of vaccines will be given out in four phases and prioritized for people in high risk groups. As more vaccines become available, the phases will expand until anyone who wants to receive the vaccine can get it. Below is more information about the current distribution plan and other areas of interest and/or concern you may have:

What does the current distribution plan look like for our county and state?
The current distribution plan is broken down into four phases, based on those individuals who are at the highest risk of getting COVID-19. Please note that Phase 1 is broken down further into sub-groups in order to make sure that essential health care workers and long term staff are offered the vaccine first, due to the increased risk of daily exposure to the virus.

Phase 1a:
- Health care workers that are at high risk for exposure based on work duties.
- Long term care staff in settings where most residents have multiple high-risk health conditions

Phase 1b:
- Assisted Living Staff
- Group Home Staff
- Home Caregivers
- Essential workers at high risk exposure and who have multiple high-risk health conditions, i.e.
  workers in meat packing plants and migrant farm workers
- Adults with multiple high-risk health conditions such as:
  - Cancer
  - Chronic Kidney Disease
  - COPD
  - Immunosuppressed from organ transplant(s)
  - Obesity
  - Serious Heart Disease
  - Sickle Cell Disease
  - Type 2 diabetes
- Adults in congregate settings with multiple high risk health conditions, i.e. incarcerated and homeless individuals

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Phase 2:

- Health care workers that are moderately exposed
- Residents in congregate settings, not in Phase 1
- Essential workers in industry and at a high risk of exposure
- Individuals 65+ years old with no or 1 chronic disease
- Teachers and school staff

Phase 3:

- Health care workers at moderate exposure
- Workers in industry and at increased risk of exposure, not included in Phases 1 and 2
- K-12, College students

Phase 4:

- All other healthcare workers, not included in Phases 1-3
- Remaining Population

*Please note that these phases could change at anytime and individual health risks will be self-reported. No doctor's notes will be needed to receive the vaccine.

Will I need more than one dose of COVID-19 vaccine?

At this time, the first two prospective COVID-19 vaccines will require two doses. It is anticipated the two doses will be separated either by 21 days (with the Pfizer Vaccine) or 28 days (with the Moderna Vaccine) apart. The different vaccine products can NOT be interchangeable. The second dose must be completed with the same vaccine brand as the first dose.

Will vaccines be tracked? Why?

Many of the vaccines, including the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, require two doses given a set number of days apart. It is important to know when a person received the first dose of vaccine and which vaccine to ensure they receive the second dose of the same vaccine at the right time. This information will be protected health information. North Carolina will use a secure data system to track the vaccine called the COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS)

How do we know the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective?

Safety is the top priority for any vaccine. Early results from the first COVID-19 vaccines tested in people showed it worked as intended, with no serious side effects. New vaccines undergo a rigorous review of laboratory and clinical data to ensure the safety and effectiveness of these products. These vaccines may also be required to undergo additional studies to further evaluate the vaccine and often to address specific questions about the vaccine's safety, effectiveness, or possible side effects (FDA). The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make COVID-19 vaccines available (CDC).

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If I already had COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?
The CDC has found that once you have COVID-19, you have a natural immunity for 90 days. Additional research, however, is needed to know if an individual has a natural immunity past this 90 day timeframe or not.

How long will immunity from the COVID-19 vaccine last?
The duration of immunity from COVID-19 vaccines are currently being evaluated. Data from clinical trials will be used to determine how long immunity will last and if it will be necessary for people to receive a booster dose of vaccine each year. Additional information will be forthcoming as vaccine studies continue.

Will the vaccine give me COVID-19 or make me sick?
Vaccines contain the same germs that cause disease. They have been either killed or weakened to the point that they cannot make you sick. A vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce antibodies, exactly like it would if you were exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you gradually develop a immunity to the disease, without having to get the disease first.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?
Any vaccine or medication can cause side effects. For the most part these are minor (for example, a sore arm or low-grade fever) and go away within a few days. Safety is the top priority of any vaccine. Early results from the first COVID-19 vaccines tested in people showed it worked as intended, with no serious side effects.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine give me COVID-19?
No, the COVID-19 vaccine <u>will</u> <u>not</u> give you COVID-19. Vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as a sore arm or fever. These symptoms are normal and are signs the body is building immunity. Learn more about how the <u>COVID-19 vaccines work</u>.

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after a vaccination. That means it's possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and could actually get sick. In this case, this would mean that the vaccine did not have enough time to provide protection to one's body.

Will COVID-19 vaccine cause me to test positive on a COVID-19 viral test?
Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States will not cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently working to assess how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

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Will there be a cost for the vaccine?
No, both prospective vaccines will be completely free and no form of insurance will be needed.

If I receive the COVID-19 vaccine will I still need to wear a mask or practice the 3W's?
Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life- conditions, it will be still important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic, like wearing masks, washing hands often, and social distancing. Experts need to understand more about the protection that the COVID-19 vaccines provide, before deciding to change recommendations on mask use. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision. The 3W's (Wear, Wait, and Wash) are the best tools we have to continue to prevent the spread of COVID19 as vaccine roll-out takes place.

What percentage of the population needs to be vaccinated to have herd immunity to COVID-19?
At this time, experts do not know exactly what percentage of people need to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. Some believe it would take 60-70% of the U.S. population getting vaccinated before that could happen. Herd immunity is a term used to describe when enough people have protection from either previous infection or have gotten vaccinated in order to prevent the spread of the virus or bacteria in the community. As a result of herd immunity, everyone within the community is protected, even if some people don't have any protection themselves. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease

How can I be sure that I will be safe from getting sick when going out to get vaccines, if the flu and COVID-19 are spreading throughout my community?
Healthcare providers are taking extra precautions to protect patients. Some of these measures include things like wearing masks, hand and surface sanitation practices, and physical distancing. It is important for you to take measures to protect yourself and others, as well. Make sure that you continue to take everyday preventive actions.
Keeping your vaccines up to date protects not only you, but others around you. It is the best defense against vaccine preventable diseases.

Am I required to get a COVID-19 vaccine?
No, you are not required to get a COVID-19 vaccine at this time. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19, however, will be one of the best ways to protect yourself and everyone around you. If you are protected from getting COVID-19, you cannot pass the disease to others. The more people who get vaccinated against COVID-19, the better it is for everyone. The more people vaccinated means that there will be less disease in our communities, which could eventually get us closer to stopping this pandemic.

ROWAN COUNTY COVID-19 INFO
Hotline: 980-432-1800
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Website: www.rowancountync.gov/COVID-19
Data Hub: https://bit.ly/rowan-covid19-hub