

COVID-19 Update – December 14, 2020 – Vaccine Education

To: Residents and Their Family Members – The Waters Senior Living

You may be hearing on local or national news the hopeful message of the anticipated vaccine to combat COVID-19. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have now reached a long-awaited and pivotal moment. We would like to take this opportunity to share with you some information about the vaccine and what this means to you. *Please know that the information available is changing hour-by-hour. Rest assured that The Waters is connecting with all of the appropriate state health department officials to stay abreast of the latest information.*

Late Friday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer vaccine. This is a significant milestone, and one that clears the way for distribution in the United States. The Moderna vaccine is in its final stages of approval from the FDA. We are pleased that Federal and State officials have prioritized long-term care and congregate settings (both residents and staff) for early COVID vaccinations.

Things to Know:

- We are proactively preparing for the distribution and administration of the vaccine.
 - The vaccines will be distributed to designated pharmacies across the country. We are collaborating with Thrifty White and CVS pharmacies to set up vaccination clinics within each of our Waters Senior Living communities.
 - Each state's health department will be responsible for determining the distribution priorities and timeline. As we receive specific information related to our communities, we will communicate any important details to you as soon as we can.
 - All signs point to distribution in our communities within the next several weeks.
- We strongly recommend that both residents and team members receive the vaccine. Although the vaccine is not mandatory at this time, we all have a role to play in stopping this pandemic, beyond wearing masks, washing hands and staying six feet apart. The combination of having the vaccine and following the CDC guidelines utilized the past 11 months will offer the best protection from COVID.
- With direction from the CDC, congregate living settings have been tasked with preparatory steps in order to have expedited administration of the vaccine. We have been asked to obtain a list of residents and staff that will be receiving the vaccine. We have also been asked to obtain consent forms and insurance information. Your specific Waters community will be providing you with more details in the near future.
- We understand there may be many questions, and perhaps, some excitement, and even uncertainty related to the vaccine. We have included a list of **Frequently Asked Questions**.
- As the information comes in, we are committed to keeping you informed of this exciting new development in the fight against COVID-19.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information was obtained from the CDC, Leading Age MN, and from the health departments of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

Q: Why should I be vaccinated?

A: Being vaccinated against COVID-19 is one of the best ways to protect yourself and everyone around you, particularly those who are at increased risk for severe illness. Wearing masks and social distancing helps 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 is ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Getting these shots will not only protect you from being infected; it will help us take a big step towards ending this pandemic. The breadth of research and intensive studies have shown that these vaccines are effective and safe.

Q: When will the vaccine be available to me?

A: The exact dates of the vaccination clinics is unknown at this time, however we anticipate the vaccine will be available in our Waters communities in the next several weeks.

Q: Do I have to continue taking precautions (i.e. wearing a mask) after getting the vaccine?

A: Yes, we should continue the practices of wearing masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing even after the vaccine is administered. The vaccine is only a portion of the solution for eliminating COVID-19. In time, we will gain more knowledge about the vaccine's successful impact of turning the tide of this pandemic.

Q: Should I be tested for COVID prior to receiving the vaccine?

No, you do not need to get a COVID test prior to getting the vaccine.

Q: How do I know the vaccine is safe, since it was developed so quickly?

A: Scientists have worked on coronavirus research for decades starting with the original SARS outbreak and influenza. Scientists only needed to isolate certain things about COVID-19 to begin creating a vaccine because we already know so much about the type of virus. Due to the public health crisis created by the pandemic, many private, government and independent groups came together and cooperated on a vaccine. This scale of cooperation is not typical, and the partnership created resources and information sharing to develop the vaccine faster.

Q: Is there any risk that I can get COVID-19 from the vaccination?

A: No, there is no risk of getting COVID-19 from the vaccination. This vaccination contains no actual COVID-19 virus. You may experience some side effects from the vaccine such as a sore arm, mild aches, or fever. This is your immune system responding to the vaccine and is expected. This does not mean you are getting sick with COVID-19. It is necessary for the vaccine to trigger this immune response to produce the immunity you need against COVID-19.

Q: What are the side effects of the vaccine? Are there long-term effects?

A: There may be side effects from the COVID-19 vaccination such as a sore arm, mild, generalized aches, headache, and fever. This vaccine will not make you sick with COVID-19; the side effects are a result of your body's immune system working to understand and create a response to the virus, which is needed for your immunity. The long-term effects are still being studied. The research has shown that the first two months showed no severe side effects. As with all vaccinations, long-term effects are monitored for up to 10 years.

Q: Should / can I still get a flu shot?

A: It is important you still receive a flu shot. However, it is not recommended to have a flu shot within one month of the COVID-19 vaccine. If you have not already received your flu shot, speak with your doctor about the best plan for receiving flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Will I have to pay for it?

A: The COVID-19 vaccine will be provided at no cost. However, it will be required to gather insurance information for the administration of the vaccine, along with the consent form, prior to vaccination. It is unclear how payment will be handled outside of the pandemic period.

Q: How many vaccine shots will I need and when?

A: The COVID vaccine will only be effective if you receive two doses/injections. The first dose of the vaccine prepares your immune system. The second injection will either be given 21- or 28-days after the first injection and provides the majority of the immunity. The timeframe for the second injection depends upon the manufacturer and what is written in the emergency use authorization. The Waters will make sure you have this information once vaccines are distributed and ready for administration.

Q: How long is the vaccine effective?

A: We do not know. Because the vaccine is new, the length of immunity is unknown. There are some vaccines that do not require additional shots and there are other vaccines, such as the tetanus vaccine, that require periodic boosters. The vaccine will continue to be studied over time and if additional boosters are needed that information will be released when it is known.

Q: When will residents be vaccinated?

A: Along with healthcare workers, residents are also a priority group for vaccination. We do not know the exact plan for vaccination; however, we do know that residents will be included in Phase 1 of the vaccine. We are still waiting for finalized timeframes. We anticipate that the vaccine will be available in our Waters communities in the next several weeks.

Q: Is it better to get natural immunity for COVID by getting the virus instead of the vaccine?

A: In many cases, the way to develop natural immunity to a pathogen is to become sick, have our immune systems respond, and then our immune system "remembers" the pathogen to keep us from getting sick again. However, our immune systems cannot always "remember" the pathogen; or, it cannot always fight off the virus. Right now, we do not know if becoming sick with COVID-19 actually causes you to be immune to re-infection with the virus or not. It is believed that the vaccination does provide immunity to the disease. Additionally,

there is no way to predict whether someone with COVID-19 will develop severe disease and suffer significant health complications or not; becoming sick is a risk and there is no way to predict the outcome of illness.

Q: What if I am concerned about an allergic reaction?

A: If you have any concerns related to an allergic reaction, consult with your primary care physician before getting the vaccine.

Q: Once the vaccine is approved, how will I schedule it?

A: Once we know the specific details of the vaccine clinics in our Waters locations, your community leadership will share the details with you. In the meantime, you will be asked to complete a *form that asks if you want to receive or decline* the vaccine. Please know, that the pharmacies may only have a 1-week notice of shipment of the vaccine which means that the vaccine clinics will be scheduled on a very short notice.

The news of a vaccine gives us hope for a new chapter in our fight against this virus. You have been instrumental in this fight, and we are grateful for your partnership, patience, and now, hope, for a positive next step in this COVID-19 journey. Should you have any questions, please reach out to your Executive Director.

Sincerely,

Tami A. Kozikowski | President and Chief Executive Officer
1600 Hopkins Crossroad
Minneapolis, MN 55305
Main: 952-358-5100



[Visit us at www.TheWaters.com](http://www.TheWaters.com)