THE TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT is urging everyone in our community to get vaccinated for COVID-19 when they are eligible. Everyone has a part in ensuring that the community stays healthy and safe. Please continue to wear masks, maintain distance, wash hands, and follow gathering guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccination

Are the vaccines safe?
Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same rigorous review that all vaccines must follow in the U.S. In New York, the State’s independent COVID-19 Clinical Advisory Task Force also approved these COVID-19 vaccines as safe and effective. While the vaccine is in use, the FDA and the CDC are constantly monitoring for new side effects.

Can children be vaccinated with the current vaccines?
No. Because the first round of clinical trials did not include individuals under age 16 years for the Pfizer vaccine, and under 18 for the Moderna, they have not been cleared for use with children. Clinical trials for these age groups are being planned or are already underway.

Should I get the vaccine if I have had a coronavirus infection?
Yes. The science shows that the vaccine provides better and longer-lasting protection than the defenses your body builds up when you were infected. If you are sick with COVID-19 now, you must wait and finish the 10-day isolation period before you make an appointment to be vaccinated.

Will getting vaccinated prevent me from getting sick with COVID-19?
Most likely. The first two vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, are 90-95% effective at preventing the disease when administered as the manufacturer has specified.

What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?
Discuss this with your doctor. Science is still investigating whether extra caution should be taken by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Your doctor will have the latest information.

If I get vaccinated, will I test positive on future COVID-19 viral tests?
No. Approved vaccines will not cause a positive on any of the tests used to detect a current infection.

Could I become infected with COVID-19 from getting vaccinated?
No. None of the vaccines approved or under review for use in the U.S. are made with the live virus that causes a COVID-19 infection.

Can I infect others even after I’m vaccinated?
Maybe. This is still being studied, so you should continue taking all precautions when around others who are not in your household.

Are the vaccines effective against COVID-19 “variants” from the UK and elsewhere?
There is still only limited information about how well the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work against known variants. Scientists believe they will provide protection against the UK variant, though the effectiveness rate may not be as high, and higher coverage rates may be needed.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?
The vaccination is an injection (shot) like the flu vaccine. The most common side effects are injection site pain/soreness, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, fever. There is more info on our website.

When can I be vaccinated?
New York State is determining when individuals can be vaccinated based on a variety of factors. These include your age, your job or profession, and whether or not you have underlying medical conditions. The guidelines are subject to change without notice, and the Health Department is doing everything possible to make sure the word gets out.

How much will it cost to get vaccinated against COVID-19?
There is no charge or co-pay to be vaccinated. However, if you have health insurance or Medicare Part B, bring your card with you to the clinic.

What do I need to bring to the vaccination site?
If you are eligible to be vaccinated based on your age, you need to bring identification that shows your date of birth and that you are a resident of New York State. If you are eligible to be vaccinated based on your job or employment, you need to bring documentation to show where you work and what your job is. There are complete details on our website.

When do I get the second dose of the vaccine?
Your second dose is 28 days after your first for the Moderna vaccine, 21 days for the Pfizer vaccine. You will schedule your appointment for the second before you leave the vaccination clinic. The second dose must be given at the same location where you got the first. Second doses are counted and distributed separately from the weekly NYS allotment to counties.

If you have additional questions call 2-1-1 (877-211-8667) Or email COVID19vaccines@tompkins-co.org