

## ROTARY Q&A with OSDH

1. I'm fortunate to be receiving a vaccination in Duncan this week. How does scheduling the second vaccination work?

Once you attend your first vaccine appointment, you will receive a follow-up email with a countdown and an opportunity to schedule your second dose appointment.

2. Can you address the bog-down in the vaccination process in Oklahoma? What's the best way to obtain an appointment (b/c the OSDH site is not working well). I have family and friends who have been frustrated trying to get an appointment, trying all hours of day and night without success

The number of appointments depends on the availability of the vaccine. The state and counties receive a weekly supply of the vaccine that determines the number of appointments that can be booked. With demand being so high, it is expected that time slots will fill up quickly.

- If all slots are filled, you can check back periodically for the next available appointment. The best times each week to check for appointments are between 5 p.m. on Wednesday and 8 a.m. on Thursday.
- If you are part of a priority group currently eligible to receive the vaccine, you will be able to register immediately for your appointment. The email you receive after registration will direct you back to the portal to schedule your appointment based on vaccine availability at the location you select.
- Once you schedule your appointment, a confirmation email will be sent to you with a QR code and a record of your appointment time and location.
- You will also receive email reminders as your appointment date approaches.
- You will need a photo ID and the QR code from your confirmation email to check in to your appointment on the day of.

3. If you had the virus, should you get a vaccine? I have heard conflicting reports.

- We recommend you receive the vaccine, even if you have already had COVID-19.
- The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Since this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last.
- The CDC reports that some early evidence suggests that natural immunity may not last very long.
- Getting the vaccine, even if you already had COVID-19, will help you protect yourself and others.

4. If you have received a "you're in phase 2" notice, how long and how will it work to get an appointment for a vaccine?

- Pre-registration allows anyone in Oklahoma to register their contact information with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and indicate that they would like to be notified when the vaccine is available to them.
- After you enter your information, if you're eligible to receive the vaccine, you will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule your appointment.

- When you use the portal to enter your information, a message will be sent to the email address you provide to let you know if you are eligible to receive the vaccine at this time.
- If you are part of a priority group currently eligible to receive the vaccine, you will be able to schedule your appointment. The email will direct you to the portal to schedule your appointment.

5. Once you've receive the first dose, how do you get the second? Are we in the same "pool" as all the rest needing the first dose?

Once you attend your first vaccine appointment, you will receive a follow-up email with a countdown and an opportunity to schedule your second dose appointment.

As for you being in the same “pool” as the rest needing the first dose, registering for your 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> dose will not change when you receive your vaccine. There is no list for Oklahomans to be added to in order to be included in the state’s phased approach to vaccine distribution. However, registering and providing your contact information will make it easier for the state to notify you when it is your turn.

6. I had no problem registering & getting my first vaccine. My husband has never even received the initial email confirming his registration. He re-registered and it showed on the site he was already in system. Without emails he can't even try to get an appt.

- This is likely because he’s not in the current phase group, but he will be notified when the vaccine is available to him.
- It should be noted that registering early does not guarantee an appointment slot when your phase opens; it simply makes the booking process quicker.

7. After both vaccine shots, what are the chances you can still spread COVID? And, how many people need to be vaccinated before we can begin to return to normal our daily activities?

- Even once you have the vaccine, it is vital that you continue to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Everyone should continue to wear a mask, wash their hands and watch their distance. Stopping a pandemic requires all the tools available.
- We know the vaccine is effective at protecting recipients from COVID-19 — but you may still be able to spread it to others.
- The vaccine is designed to protect you, but is not a replacement for taking action to protect others.
- Right now, CDC has not determined if or when it will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Medical experts still need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before making that decision.

- These actions, in conjunction with the vaccine plan, can make a huge difference in keeping our families and communities safe and healthy in the long term.

8. If we/Oklahoma vaccine 50,000 a week, to get to 80% of Oklahomans, it will take 48 weeks. Is the primary problem the availability of vaccine or the dispensing of the vaccine?

- The number of appointments depends on the availability of the vaccine. The state and counties receive a weekly supply of the vaccine that determines the number of appointments that can be booked. With demand being so high, it is expected that time slots will fill up quickly.
- If all slots are filled, you can check back periodically for the next available appointment. The best times each week to check for appointments are between 5 p.m. on Wednesday and 8 a.m. on Thursday.

9. Is it true that hospitals get paid more for reporting deaths as COVID deaths?

<https://www.abc10.com/article/news/verify/verify-do-hospitals-get-more-funding-by-marking-deaths-covid-19-related/103-36834bad-1113-4f67-8804-5d97e6593745>

According to this article at abc10.com (link here), ABC10 can verify that hospitals do get reimbursed for coronavirus related care, which unfortunately includes deaths.

As for the second part of our viewer's question, a Medicare spokesperson said it is unlikely. "Claims with inaccurate diagnosis or DRG would be subject to recoupment and/or other potential civil or criminal charges for false claims." So far, it is unverified that hospitals are falsifying records for financial gain.

**WHAT WE FOUND:**

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] which oversees the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, under the federal coronavirus aid relief bill known as the CARES Act, hospitals get an extra 20% in Medicare reimbursements on top of traditional rates due to the public health emergency.

That's for COVID-19 related admissions, which can include deaths. The pay-out amount varies, according to a Medicare spokesperson who said "Medicare adjusts hospital payment based on geographic variation in local costs." Also, earlier this month, HHS announced a second round of federal relief for hospitals in high impact areas, totaling \$10 billion. Of that second-round money, HHS reported 63 California hospitals received \$50,000 for each eligible coronavirus patient they admitted between Jan. 1 and June 10, 2020. That's a combined total of more than \$607 million.

10. If you have already "had COVID", are you safe/ok to wander around the general population without a mask (assuming you are past the 14+ day time frame)?

- Even once you have the vaccine, it is vital that you continue to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Everyone should continue to wear a mask, wash their hands and watch their distance. Stopping a pandemic requires all the tools available.
- We know the vaccine is effective at protecting recipients from COVID-19 — but you may still be able to spread it to others.
- The vaccine is designed to protect you, but is not a replacement for taking action to protect others.
- Right now, CDC has not determined if or when it will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.
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11. We will outsource the distribution of the vaccine to pharmacy locations like we see in other states?

- We have partnered with CVS and Walgreens to administer vaccines to Oklahomans working and living in long term care facilities. We do not have a current arrangement to outsource the distribution of the vaccine.
- Vaccines will be administered by healthcare professionals. In the case of frontline healthcare workers, health systems may use their own staff to administer the vaccine. In other cases, public health nurses from OSDH and county health departments will administer.

12. The portal for sign up and appointment worked very well for my husband and me. We were signed up for our second vaccine when we received our first shot. The medical staff and health care workers at the clinic were incredible and I want to say thank you. The vaccine clinics will go on for some time, is there a way to become a volunteer to assist at the vaccine clinics?

Yes, we welcome volunteers! The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) sponsors the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps (OKMRC), a trained cadre of medical, public health, and community volunteers. The OKMRC supplements existing response systems, and is made up of not only medical professionals but also **people without a medical background**.

OKMRC volunteers receive uniforms and state issued identification badges. Training opportunities are offered throughout the state, including First Aid/CPR, Psychological First Aid, Basic Disaster Life Support and Core Disaster Life Support. OKMRC volunteers gain valuable response experience and are recognized at the local, state and national levels for their contributions. For more information, or to apply for membership, go to [www.okmrc.org](http://www.okmrc.org)

13. Is there accommodation for essential workers to be able to reserve vaccination appointment during extended hours? How long after the second jab is one considered protected at the 90-95% level?

There is no accommodation at this time for extended hours. Both the Moderna vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine have been shown in late-stage vaccine trials to be safe and very effective - 94.5% and 95% effective, respectively.

14. I received confirmation of Registration, but I was locked out of Portal "birthday entered does not match." I and others have had this. Can't check or correct, and no access. Been trying and calling 211 since 1-10, but not fixed yet. Keep being told try again in day or 2 and should be corrected, and more recently will get a call. Still waiting.

After you enter your information, if you're eligible to receive the vaccine, you will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule your appointment. If a user has to abandon a registration session, be advised that they will need to wait 24 hours for the system to reset before being able to use the same email address again.

15. When do you think the state will be able to open? When will we be able to have group in-person meetings?

Right now, CDC has not determined if or when it will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Medical experts still need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before making that decision.

16. I'd really like to know if it is safe for someone with a sulfa allergy to be vaccinated. My wife is, and we're scheduled for Thursday.

Drug allergies have not been identified as a contraindication.

17. It is my understanding that it is important to get the same type of vaccine for the second as for the first. As in, if Pfizer, then Pfizer and if Moderna, then Moderna.

Yes, it is important to receive the same type of vaccine for your second dose. There will be 2<sup>nd</sup> dose clinics that are scheduled through the portal and they will have both vaccines available.

18. When looking at the portal, note that some sites are designated as being specifically used for second (or booster) doses. These sites are equipped with both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines- you need to know which vaccine you received the first time.

It's important to note that appointments only load in the system once we receive our weekly vaccine allocation. You will not be able to schedule your booster dose far in advance.

When you receive your first dose, it is important to find out if that vaccination site will also be administering your second dose. Some locations are setting that up automatically when you receive your first dose. Other locations are not, and you will need to schedule your booster vaccine through the portal.