

With the second COVID-19 vaccine being distributed this week, we know many of our patients have questions about the vaccine's availability, safety and efficacy. Below you'll find an overview of the latest information, and we'll continue to share updates as the situation evolves.

**Please Note:** North Bend Medical Center is not currently accepting requests for vaccination appointments.

## Vaccine availability

### **Is a COVID-19 vaccine currently available?**

Yes. Both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines were authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in December. Distribution of the Pfizer vaccine began on Monday, December 14 with the Moderna vaccine shipping Saturday, December 19.

### **Who is getting the COVID-19 vaccine first?**

The vaccine supply will be limited at first, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following groups get prioritized (in order):

- Healthcare workers, residents and staff of long-term care facilities.
- Healthcare workers who have direct or indirect contact with patients, as well as those who handle infectious materials.

Bay Area Hospital in collaboration with North Bend Medical Center, will initially offer the vaccine to healthcare workers who care for patients in our medical centers.

### **When will the COVID-19 vaccine be available to the general public?**

This depends on how many vaccines are approved, how much vaccine we receive, and how quickly prioritized groups can be vaccinated. As more vaccines are distributed, NBMC and other local health care providers will begin offering it to more people, in alignment with state guidelines. Currently, CDC is recommending that the next groups to be vaccinated will include:

- Workers in essential and critical industries.
- People at high risk for severe COVID-19 disease due to underlying medical conditions.
- People 65 years and older.

We are not currently accepting requests for vaccination appointments. However, please know that your health and safety are our top priority, and we will be diligent in communicating updates on this as more vaccines become available.

### **Which vaccine is NBMC receiving?**

The South Coast region will receive the vaccine developed by Moderna. The Moderna vaccine can be stored and transported by equipment typically found in most clinics. The Pfizer vaccine requires ultra-cold storage facilities (-70 degrees Celsius) which are not present in our region and, therefore, will not be available.

## Vaccine safety and efficacy

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**

Yes, any vaccine distributed at NBMC will be safe for the general public. Any COVID-19 vaccine will have:

- Completed three phases of clinical trials.
- Been reviewed and approved for safety and efficacy by:
  - The FDA, as well as the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
  - An independent three-state task force in Washington, Oregon and California.

#### **How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Both Pfizer and Moderna announced that their vaccines were more than 95% effective in Phase 3 clinical trials. Given the seasonal influenza vaccine is 40% – 60% effective, this is a remarkable achievement.

#### **How do COVID-19 vaccines work?**

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to COVID-19 without having to get the illness. Different vaccines work in different ways, but they all use material from the virus to produce an immune response. The body's immune system is then able to recognize and respond if it comes in contact with the virus again. The vaccines do NOT use the virus itself and you cannot be infected with COVID-19 by getting vaccinated.

As it has throughout the pandemic, North Bend Medical Center remains safe and open should you or a loved one require care of any kind.

Thank you,

Raj Ravuri, MD  
Chief Medical Officer