

Context:

Scientists and physicians world-wide have worked tirelessly over the past year to develop and test COVID-19 vaccines, and tens of thousands of people have participated in clinical trials that have demonstrated the safety and effectiveness of many of these vaccines. This is a major achievement.

Given the current spike in COVID-19 cases in our community and in local LTCFs, we know the administration of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will provide life-saving protection for LTC staff and residents. Additionally, vaccination of a large majority of people will be needed to control the pandemic and allow us to return to “normal life.” Unfortunately, social media has been used to rapidly-spread misinformation about the vaccines. Individuals being offered the COVID-19 vaccine should carefully review information provided by trusted and reputable resources. Open Q&A sessions will be hosted to directly address questions related to misinformation people are seeing on social media or hearing from others.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS:

General Vaccine Information:

- Please visit the comprehensive resources available from the CDC:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Here are some resources you may find particularly helpful:
 - Why should LTC residents and staff be vaccinated?
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/LTCF-residents.html>
 - How mRNA vaccines work:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/healthcare-professionals-mRNA.pdf>
 - The mRNA vaccines do not change your DNA.
- Live Webinars
 - On Monday, December 21st at 7:00 PM, Dr. Laurie Forlano, Dr. Costi Sifri, and Dr. Michael Stevens will participate in a webinar to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine for long-term care facility staff and residents. This session will be moderated by Dr. Laurie Archbald-Pannone and will consist of a 45 minute discussion moderated by Dr. Archbald-Pannone followed by a 15 minute Q&A session.
 - Webinar
URL: <https://vdhoep.webex.com/vdhoep/j.php?MTID=m3ef229a6e3c77e212667adf7f0e8f9a9>
 - Call in #: 1-408-418-9388; Meeting number (access code): 132 483 3795
 - In the next week or two, please look out for information regarding Q&A Town Hall meetings with Dr. Simmers.
 - We plan to have a virtual Town Hall for residents and families.
 - For staff, there will be an in-person Town Hall on Friday 12/18 from 2-4pm in the gym.
 - Additional sessions can be scheduled if needed.

Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness:

- Please review the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine FDA EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers for detailed information about vaccine safety:
 - <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
- Effectiveness:
 - Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been shown to be highly effective, even in older adults and those with multiple chronic health problems.

Expected Side Effects:

- Typical post-vaccination side effects are common after the COVID-19 vaccine, especially after the second dose. This means the vaccine is working!
 - **Expected** post-vaccination symptoms include: soreness or redness in the arm (injection site), fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever.
 - You **cannot** get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Post-Vaccination Safety Monitoring:

- Any significant adverse reaction following administration of the COVID-19 vaccine will be immediately reported to the CDC using the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System.
 - Data in the VAERS system will be rapidly and continually analyzed by CDC staff through these first phases of vaccine administration.
- For staff or residents with a smartphone, we recommend that individuals enroll in the text-message based V-safe active monitoring system through the CDC.
 - Individuals will get regular text messages with links to surveys about any symptoms they are having.
 - Individuals will get a call from a CDC staff member if any significant symptoms are reported.
 - How to enroll in V-Safe:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>

Special Populations:

- *****Based on safety monitoring data, FDA/CDC/ACIP guidance may change.**
 - We will keep you updated with any changes.
 - If indicated, a provider will speak directly with a resident/POA/guardian regarding specific clinical situations.
- Residents with immunodeficiency or who take immunosuppressing medications:
 - Although individuals on immunosuppressing medication (such as treatment for multiple sclerosis or cancer) were not included in clinical trials, the CDC still recommends that these individuals be vaccinated because they are at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19 infection.
- Residents with a history of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).
 - At this time, the only contraindication to receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is a known anaphylactic reaction to a component of the vaccine. (This would be very rare.)
 - Individuals with a history of anaphylaxis to another vaccine or injected medication may still receive the vaccine.
 - The CDC recommends these individuals be monitored for a longer period of time (30min) following vaccination.
 - TVH and Walgreens will have epinephrine auto-injectors available at our Vaccine Clinics.
 - Keep in mind that the risk of getting COVID-19 and having a severe complication is higher than the risk of having a rare allergic reaction to the vaccine. In other words, it is riskier to be infected with COVID than to get the COVID vaccine.
 - As cases rise in the community, the likelihood of getting COVID-19 increases.