

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
DATE: 12/11/20



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PRESS RELEASE

A COVID-19 VACCINE IS APPROVED ... SO WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GETTING VACCINATED?

If you're still undecided about being vaccinated here are the many reasons why you should!

(Toms River) – For many people the comfort of knowing a COVID-19 vaccine has finally been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) may be one of the best gifts that will come this holiday season. However, for some others, news of a vaccine brings little reason for holiday cheer.

“We certainly understand that some people have reservations about getting vaccinated,” said Daniel Regenye, Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) Public Health Coordinator/Health Officer. “But it’s important people know the facts behind the benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine and that they not get misled by unreliable information.”

Regenye went on to say that the COVID-19 vaccine is a game changer in battling the pandemic. The first vaccine approved for emergency use authorization by the FDA - and developed by Pfizer - went through all the required steps in the testing and approval process. Vaccine safety and ensuring it works is always top priority and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a list of reasons to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19

- COVID-19 vaccines were carefully evaluated in clinical trials and have been authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you’ll get COVID-19.
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination will be a safer way to help build protection

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EAU).
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. But experts don’t know how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness.
- Both natural immunity and immunity produced by a vaccine are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic

- Wearing masks and social distancing help 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 will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

For those people already convinced of the benefits, the good news is that the first shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine are expected to arrive in the coming days and weeks. However, Regeny asks that people be patient waiting for their inoculations as the vaccine will be distributed in phases. "We know right now that hospitals and long term care facilities will be part of the first phase which could start later this month with the following phases stretching into the first half of 2021. In the meantime, we still urge people to adhere to the current safety protocols as the best way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19."

To learn more about COVID-19 and vaccine facts please visit www.cdc.gov, and www.ochd.org. You can also follow the Ocean County Health Department on our Facebook page or Twitter @OCpublichealth.

The OCHD is also providing a general COVID-19 Information Call Hot Line for residents and clinicians to answer questions regarding the coronavirus. The number is 732-341-9700 ext. 7411. The NJDOH (NJPIES) hotline is available for questions around the clock at 1-800-222-1222 or by dialing 2-1-1. Other related sources; for medical COVID-19 questions call [1-800-962-1253](tel:1-800-962-1253) or **Text NJCOVID to [898-211](tel:898-211)** to receive alerts.