
COVID-19 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(Updated December 23, 2020)

How and when will Westminster Canterbury Richmond receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

CVS Health is one of the official COVID-19 Vaccination Program Providers in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program. They will provide everything we need for vaccination, including the dates we can expect to receive vaccination. We anticipate this will begin in early January. We hope to have at least ten days' notice prior to the first clinic.

How will the vaccination process work?

CVS will visit our campus to set up vaccine clinics to ensure all staff and residents have the option to receive the vaccine following the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) distribution plan. There will be three separate vaccine processes for each area of living (Mary Morton Parsons Health Center, Assisted Living and Independent Living). Each area of living's process will include three clinics with a three-week gap between doses. This will help to accommodate the required two vaccine doses for everyone receiving the vaccine and potential new admissions and/or new hires. In order to be vaccinated, you must follow the schedule provided by CVS Health.

Who will be vaccinated first?

Through this program, we will be vaccinating both residents and employees. We tentatively anticipate Parsons Health Center employees and residents and Independent Living employees will be vaccinated first, beginning as early as Monday, January 4, 2021, with the second clinic on Monday, January 25, 2021. We do not have a date scheduled for Assisted Living yet.

How can I obtain a COVID-19 vaccine?

Once CVS has a confirmed date to start the vaccine clinics, we will communicate the location and times to all residents and employees. We will distribute a Vaccine Administration Record (VAR) from CVS with instructions.

Is there a cost for the vaccine?

The vaccine will be provided free for all residents and employees.

Am I required to be vaccinated for COVID-19?

While Westminster Canterbury is not mandating that employees and residents take the vaccine, we hope to have 100% participation. If you choose not to be vaccinated, you may have to follow additional protocols, such as wearing a mask, for a longer period of time than those who are vaccinated.

Is the vaccine safe and effective?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires 50% efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are showing 94-95% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 disease during the trial phase.

FDA requires eight weeks of safety data on the COVID-19 vaccine. Safety is the most important requirement for the vaccine and is assessed in trials by independent experts. Most adverse side effects occur within six weeks of vaccine administration, and the FDA has required eight weeks of safety monitoring so it can track any side effects. FDA advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess safety. The current phase 3 trials have 30,000 to 50,000 participants. This really demonstrates how safety is a top priority for the FDA and the medical community.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. This is not a live virus. It uses a technology that will provoke an immune response that can block or kill the virus if a person becomes infected. It will help us build antibodies that will remember how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if we are infected in the future.

Do I have to get the vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

Yes, due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection is possible, it is necessary to get the vaccine even if you have already had COVID-19. It is safe to get the vaccine and can add additional protection without causing any harm. Even if you have had a test that shows you have COVID-19 antibodies, you should still get the vaccine.

Can I take the COVID-19 vaccine if I currently have COVID-19?

No, even if asymptomatic for COVID-19, vaccination should be postponed. While mild illness is not a contraindication to vaccination, medical visits for those with COVID-19 should be postponed to avoid exposing others to the virus.

What are the side effects?

The vaccines currently being tested in clinical trials can cause short-term discomfort (such as headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever and pain at injection site) in a percentage of the people who receive them. This is the effect of your body developing immunity. Clinical trial participants reported that the discomfort went away after a day, sometimes sooner. When you receive the second dose of the vaccine, the discomfort can be more pronounced. This is a normal reaction, so be prepared.

- If you experience discomfort after the first dose of the vaccine, it is very important that you still receive the second dose a few weeks later for the vaccine to be effective. If these symptoms last more than 24 hours, please contact your physician for an evaluation.
- **This does not mean that the vaccine has given you COVID-19.** Rather, this means that the vaccine is causing your body's immune system to react and create antibodies to fight off the virus. **In other words, if you feel some discomfort, then the vaccine is doing its job!**
- In some cases, people may **already** be infected with COVID-19 when they get the vaccine but are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. If they later have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for it, it **does not** mean they got COVID-19 from the vaccine.

What if I have an adverse reaction to the vaccination?

The CVS team and Westminster Canterbury nursing staff will be available to monitor for adverse drug reactions. If you have allergies that require an EpiPen, please have it with you when you are vaccinated.

How many shots do I need to get?

The vaccine is a two-dose series that is administered three weeks apart. Both doses are necessary for protection. Protection is not immediate. It will take one to two weeks after the second dose before you are considered fully vaccinated and protected. The efficacy rate with the second dose is 95%.

Do I have to get both doses of the vaccine?

Yes. For it to be effective, you **must** have both doses from the same company.

Do I still need to follow precautions after I take the vaccine?

Because we have limited information on how well the vaccine works in the general population; how much it may reduce disease, severity or transmission; and how long protection lasts, vaccinated persons should continue to follow all current guidance to protect themselves and others. This includes:

- Wearing a mask
- Staying at least six feet away from others
- Avoiding crowds
- Washing hands often
- Following CDC travel guidance
- Following quarantine guidance after an exposure to someone with COVID-19
- Following any workplace guidance

Even though you have received your vaccine, most of the people around you and outside our community have not. We know the vaccine prevents disease in the vaccinated person, but it still may be possible to transmit the disease to others, until the vaccine is in widespread use.

Should I quarantine if I have COVID-19 symptoms after getting the vaccine?

Yes, you should follow quarantine guidance from your physician and Westminster Canterbury if you develop COVID-19 symptoms. It usually takes the body a few weeks to develop immunity after receiving a vaccine. If you do experience COVID-19 symptoms after vaccination, contact your physician or the Clinic.

Should I quarantine if I am exposed to COVID-19 between doses?

Yes, you should. Please follow quarantine protocols as directed by your physician and Westminster Canterbury.

If I am immunocompromised, can I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The two current versions of vaccine are not live attenuated vaccines and appear safe to administer in immunocompromised populations. According to Anthony Fauci, MD, “Patients with compromised immune systems, whether due to chemotherapy or a bone marrow transplant, should plan to be vaccinated against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) when they have the chance.”

Do I have to consent to vaccination?

Each person who receives the COVID-19 vaccine must provide a consent form. For any residents for whom a family member or medical POA must grant permission, Westminster Canterbury will need these responsible parties to quickly return consent forms once the forms are available. We are able to take verbal and email consent. A specific request for consent forms will be communicated separately.

Sources: AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute & Long-Term Care Medicine
West Virginia Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
CVS Health

Additional Resources from the CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html>