



January 11, 2021

Dear Ypsilanti Community Schools Staff,

We have been hearing how excited many of you are at the prospect of getting vaccinated soon! This morning, the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) asked us to register our district as part of the Phase 1B vaccination planning, which we promptly did. **Ypsilanti Community Schools staff do not need to take any action today. Staff can expect information on how to request a vaccine appointment by the end of the week.**

Here are some additional updates:

1. We know staff have many questions about the vaccination process, both related to the safety of the vaccine and the logistics of getting vaccinated. We have included an FAQ on the second page of this letter with information compiled from our local health systems.
2. You may have seen a link for individuals in Phase 1B to request an appointment in the news or on their website. **Because you are employed by Ypsilanti Community Schools, you do not need to complete this individual request.** *The individual link is meant for Washtenaw County residents who fall into a 1B category, but are employed in another county.*
3. Remember that PreK-12 school staff who are 50+ years old will be prioritized first by the Washtenaw County Health Department, and that vaccination will be available to *all* school staff soon. While all states are receiving limited supplies of the vaccine, our partners at WCHD have been working incredibly hard to prepare vaccination sites with our healthcare providers so they can ramp up vaccination efforts as soon as they are able.
4. For in-person staff, please contact your supervisor to arrange a time to obtain the vaccination if it is necessary to schedule during your usually scheduled work time. Staff working remotely may use work time to receive the vaccine with their supervisor's approval as long as it does not disrupt instruction or critical work responsibilities. A second free vaccination will also be provided as dictated by the vaccine manufacturer. As soon as more information on this is available, we will send it to all staff. Please watch your work email for more information over the coming days and weeks.

Given the limited vaccine supply and limited staffing capacity to administer the vaccine, if you are able to get vaccinated from another trusted source, please feel free to do so. Vaccination is available based on either residency or employment, and if you live in another county, you may want to check that county's availability. Additionally and as supplies increase, COVID-19 vaccine may become available through your healthcare provider or pharmacy.

We strongly encourage all Ypsilanti Community School District staff to get both doses of the vaccine as soon as you are able. At this time, this vaccine is not mandatory, but it is another very important and effective tool in preventing illness and death due to COVID-19. We will also continue using face masks, social distancing, good hand cleaning, and isolation or quarantine.

As always, thank you for your continued patience and understanding. Please watch for additional updates later this week as we continue working with the Washtenaw County Health Department.

Sincerely,

Alena Zachery-Ross

Alena Zachery-Ross
Superintendent
Ypsilanti Community Schools

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Are the vaccines safe?

Before receiving approval for emergency use, pharmaceutical companies must provide evidence that their vaccines are safe. A team of experts from the FDA, CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and other agencies reviewed all available data on safety and efficacy before recommending them for use. *(Michigan Medicine)*

How does the mRNA vaccine work?

The COVID-19 vaccine gives your immune system a preview of the coronavirus, so it learns how to stop it. It triggers antibodies in your blood to attack the virus's unique spike protein. Your immune system learns from the vaccine how to quickly recognize the actual virus and stop it from multiplying. The idea is to stop SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from getting into cells, replicating itself and making you sick. *(St. Joseph Mercy Health System)*

Who can get vaccinated through the Washtenaw County Health Department?

People who live or work in Washtenaw County will be able to get vaccinated through WCHD. *(Washtenaw County Health Department)*

My primary care physician, pharmacy or other healthcare provider contacted me saying I can get the vaccine through them. Should I do this?

If you have the opportunity to receive the vaccine from another healthcare provider, please feel free to do so. *(Washtenaw County Health Department)*

How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine are needed?

Two shots are needed to provide the complete protection. The first one primes the immune system, helping it to recognize the virus, and the second one strengthens the immune response. The Pfizer vaccine requires the second dose 3 weeks after the first dose, and the Moderna vaccine requires the second dose 4 weeks after the first dose. *(St. Joseph Mercy Health System)*

What are common side effects of the vaccine?

Side effects are like other vaccines. The most common side effects are pain/redness at the injection site, headache, fatigue, muscle/joint aches and low-grade fever. The side effects respond well to Tylenol and ibuprofen. Most side effects last less than 24 hours and those ages 55 and older reported fewer side effects. *(St. Joseph Mercy Health System)*

If someone is vaccinated can they still be a carrier of COVID-19 and bring it into their household?

We are hopeful that vaccinated individuals will be less likely to carry the virus that causes COVID-19; however, additional studies are needed to confirm. *(Beaumont)*

Who should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

There are very few individuals who cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccine. If in doubt, rather than withholding vaccination, seek advice from your primary care physician, relevant specialist or immunization team right away. Beaumont will follow guidance issued by the CDC and FDA to identify individuals who should not receive the vaccine. Minor illnesses without fever or systemic upset are not valid reasons to postpone immunization. People currently sick and experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not receive the vaccination until they recover. *(Beaumont)*

Is the vaccine safe for people with conditions or medications that can weaken the immune system?

The early clinical trials did not test the vaccines in these populations but based on the current data, the benefit of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is greater than the risks of getting COVID-19. Talk to your health care provider about the potential risks and benefits of the vaccine in your specific situation. *(Michigan Medicine)*

How did a vaccine get developed and approved so quickly? Was the process rushed?

Producing a vaccine against COVID-19 has been the top priority of scientists and governments around the world to help bring an end to the pandemic. With the coordinated and enormous investment of resources, development of these vaccines has been accelerated, all while maintaining standards for safety and efficacy. Rather than eliminating steps from traditional vaccine development timelines, steps are proceeding simultaneously, such as scaling up manufacturing while safety and efficacy data are collected. *(Michigan Medicine)*

See FAQ webpages from the [Washtenaw County Health Department](#), [Michigan Medicine](#), [St. Joseph Mercy Health System](#), and [Beaumont](#).