COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ's

Source: Focused Post-Acute Care Partners
Edits by Dr. Larry Wilson on 12/22/20

1) Is the vaccine going to be mandatory?
No, the vaccine is being administered under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) and is not mandated to take. At this time, the vaccine is only going to be administered if you voluntarily want to receive it.

2) Which vaccine will I receive?
The vaccine we are receiving currently is the Pfizer vaccine.

3) How many doses of the vaccine will I need to receive?
With the Pfizer vaccine, you will receive 2 doses, 21 days apart.

4) Will this vaccine protect me from getting sick with COVID-19?
After receiving the vaccine, you will be protected from the virus. Like the influenza vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine will either protect you from getting the virus, or if you get the virus, it will likely lessen severe. The vaccine is still being studied to see how efficient it is in protecting people from the virus. Early Phase 3 results suggest a 94.5% reduction in risk of contracting the virus once fully vaccinated.

5) How long does it take after receiving the vaccine to become effective?
After the first dose it is reported to be about 75% effective against the virus. After the second dose, it is reported to be about 94.5% effective against the virus. The vaccine is fully effective after two (2) weeks from receiving your second dose.

6) Will I ever have to receive the vaccine again after receiving the two (2) doses?
The vaccine is still being studied, so it has not been determined yet how frequently we will have to receive the vaccine to continue immunity. We may have to receive it annually, like we do the influenza vaccine, but immunity may last much longer, and we may only need to receive boosters periodically. It will take time for the FDA and the CDC to determine how frequently the vaccine will need to be given.

7) Once I have received the vaccine, will I have to still wear a mask and PPE?
Yes, the CDC has not considered changing any PPE requirements at this time, so you will continue to follow the current PPE requirements we are adhering to currently. You will still have to follow all other COVID-19 protocols, mask wearing, social distancing, avoiding large gatherings, etc. It will take time for the FDA and the CDC to determine when the current PPE requirements can be modified. At this time there is some suggestion one can still spread the virus even when protected from getting it by the vaccine.

8) Once I have received the vaccine will I still have to get tested for COVID-19?
Yes, the CDC has not considered changing any testing requirements at this time, so you will continue to be tested at the frequency we are currently adhering to. It will take time for the FDA and CDC to determine when the current testing requirements can be modified.

The ingredients in the vaccine will not cause you to test positive for COVID-19.

9) Will the vaccine make me sick/give me COVID-19?
The vaccine will not give you COVID-19. You might experience some minor side effects from the vaccine, like what you might experience with any vaccine.

The most common side effects are a local reaction such as redness and soreness at the injection site, but those side effects should not interfere with daily activities, including reporting to work. These side effects should resolve within 24-48 hours.

Some people may report a low-grade fever, mild headache, fatigue after vaccination. Most of these side effects were experienced in about 60% of people aged 55 and under after the first dose, and 65%-70% of people aged 55 and under after the second dose. Again, these side effects should not interfere with daily activities, including reporting to work. These side effects should resolve within 24-48 hours.

It is important to know that cough, shortness of breath (SOB), high fever, and loss of taste or smell are not side effects associated with receiving the vaccine. If you experience these after receiving the vaccine, you will need to be tested for COVID-19 because it is likely that you encountered COVID-19 prior to developing an immune response to the vaccine.

10) Is the vaccine safe?
Pfizer has run tests that include more than 44,000 people. The FDA analysis of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness on people aged 16 and older found no specific safety concerns.

If you are unsure if you should receive the vaccine, you should consult with your physician to get his/her advice prior to accepting the vaccine.

11) If I have already tested positive for COVID-19, do I need to still take the vaccine?
Yes, the CDC recommends that even though you may already have had the virus, immunity from having the virus, as measured by detection of antibodies, typically lasts about to three (3) months, so they are also recommending you receive the vaccine to extend your immunity.

12) Will the vaccine cost me anything?
The government will be providing the vaccines for free, but providers will be allowed to charge a fee for giving the vaccine. Your Health Insurance information will be obtained for the providers to recoup the fee from public and private insurance plans and from a government fund to cover uninsured individuals. You will not have to pay anything out of your own pocket.

13) I suffer from seasonal allergies/food allergies, should I accept the vaccine knowing I have "allergies?"
Unless you have a known allergy to the contents of the vaccine (located on the EUA Fact Sheet) or have had a severe reaction from receiving another type of vaccine in the past, you are OK to receive the vaccine as severe allergic reactions are not common.