

# HIDALGO COUNTY COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC FAQ

## January 4, 2020

### **Where and when can I receive the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

The state of Texas is providing distributing information. Simply type in your ZIP code and the interactive site will make you aware of the closest locations to receive the vaccine and it will also provide the amount those locations have received in vaccine supply. [Click here](#) for site information.

### **Is there a cost to receive the vaccine?**

No. Please be advised that Federal Officials are offering the vaccine at no cost but are also allowing private facilities to charge administrative fees that may be billed directly to insurance companies.

### **Who is a candidate to receive the vaccine first?**

*The following information is the state definition for individuals who are eligible for vaccinations on Tuesday:*

#### **First Tier**

1. Paid and unpaid workers in hospital settings working directly with patients who are positive or at high risk for COVID-19. Such as but not limited to:

- a. Physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and other support staff (custodial staff, etc.)*
- b. Additional clinical staff providing supporting laboratory, pharmacy, diagnostic and/or rehabilitation services*
- c. Others having direct contact with patients or infectious materials;*

2. Long-term care staff working directly with vulnerable residents. Includes:

- a. Direct care providers at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and state supported living centers*
- b. Physicians, nurses, personal care assistants, custodial, food service staff;*

3. EMS providers who engage in 9-1-1 emergency services like pre-hospital care and transport;

4. Home health care workers, including hospice care, who directly interface with vulnerable and high-risk patients;

5. Residents of long-term care facilities.

## Second Tier

1. Staff working in outpatient care settings who interact with symptomatic patients. Such as but not limited to:

- a. Physicians, nurses, and other support staff (custodial staff, etc.)*
- b. Clinical staff providing diagnostic, laboratory, and/or rehabilitation services*
- c. Non 9-1-1 transport for routine care*
- d. Healthcare workers in corrections and detention facilities;*

2. Direct care staff in freestanding emergency medical care facilities and urgent care clinics;

3. Community pharmacy staff who may provide direct services to clients, including vaccination or testing for individuals who may have COVID;

4. Public health and emergency response staff directly involved in administration of COVID testing and vaccinations;

5. Last responders who provide mortuary or death services to decedents with COVID-19. Includes:

- a. Embalmers and funeral home workers who have direct contact with decedents*
- b. Medical examiners and other medical certifiers who have direct contact with decedents;*

6. School nurses who provide health care to students and teachers.

### **Also currently eligible for vaccines under state protocol are:**

1. People 65 years of age and older;
2. People 18 years of age and older with at least one chronic medical condition that puts them at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, such as but not limited to:
  - Cancer
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
  - Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies

- Solid organ transplantation
- Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

**Is there a protocol being followed?**

Yes. Hidalgo County will be following state protocol that targets healthcare workers. These workers will be asked to provide proof that they are in the healthcare industry.

The state protocol and Tuesday's clinic also targets anyone born before 1955 and are now 65 years or older. In addition, people aged 18 and older with certain medical conditions are eligible to be vaccinated with the advice of their doctors. Medical proof is required.

**Will I need to bring any type of proof or letter stating my medical conditions?**

Qualified recipients with qualifying medical conditions are strongly encouraged to consult with and secure permission from their respective doctors to receive the vaccinations. A doctor's note or medical proof of a qualifying medical condition will expedite the process.

**Do I need to preregister or make an appointment to receive the vaccine?**

No. Vaccines will be administered to qualifying individuals on a first come, first served basis. More information, including a form that can be downloaded, printed and pre filled-out, is available on the Hidalgo County website at:

<https://www.hidalgocounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/43509/Pre-screen-forms>. (Please bring the pre filled-out forms with you, but do not worry if you do not have internet access; forms will be available on site.)

**Once I show up to receive the vaccine, is it a sure thing that I will be seen and administered the vaccination?**

No. After eligibility has been established, the vaccines will be administered on a first come, first served basis and/or until supplies run out.

**If I'm not seen will I be given a number or given priority to be seen the following day?**

No. All eligible recipients will be attended on a first come first served basis and/or until supplies run out.

**Once I receive the vaccine, will I be told when to come back for my second dose of the vaccination?**

Once vaccinated, use your smartphone to [visit vsafe.cdc.gov](https://www.vsafe.cdc.gov). Once on the vsafe website, read the instructions and click **Get Started**. This information can be found on your vaccination record card; if you cannot find your card, please contact your healthcare provider.

Call 800-232-4636 (CDC Info) if you need help with the vsafe website. Hidalgo County will schedule a second vaccine clinic in the Mercedes area around the time that the second dose needs to be administered.

### **Who will be administering the vaccines?**

The Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department Healthcare professionals for Hidalgo County. However, the state of Texas is providing distributing information. Simply type in your ZIP code and the interactive site will make you aware of the closest locations to receive the vaccine and it will also provide the amount those locations have received in vaccine supply. [Click here](#) for site information. Please contact providers in advance to confirm vaccination locations, hours and also to confirm your eligibility beforehand.

### **How long will I have the antibodies in my system after receiving the vaccine?**

COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection, but with all types of vaccines, the body is left with a supply of “memory” T-lymphocytes as well as B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight that virus in the future.

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to produce T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes after vaccination. Therefore, it is possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to provide protection.

Sometimes after vaccination, the process of building immunity can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity.

For more information visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/how-they-work.html>

### **Do I have to get the vaccine annually?**

State, tribal, local, and territorial health departments have [developed distribution plans](#) to make sure all recommended vaccines are available to their communities. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to work at all levels with partners, including healthcare associations, on a flexible COVID-19 vaccination program that can accommodate different vaccines and adapt to different scenarios.

### **Once I receive the vaccine will I still have to wear a face mask and social distance?**

Yes.

- Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.
- With most COVID-19 vaccines, you will need 2 shots in order for them to work. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.

- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.

It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.