

Dear Jennings staff:

I am pleased to share exciting news that Jennings staff and residents will have the COVID-19 vaccine available to us in December. We are blessed to be part of this first phase of vaccines in the United States, which include health care staff and people who are most at-risk, such as:

- Health care staff in hospitals, long-term care facilities, home health, and emergency services; and
- Residents in skilled nursing and assisted living.

Together, with Medical Director Dr. James Campbell, Jennings encourages each staff member and resident to receive the vaccine. It is the best way to keep yourself from becoming ill from COVID-19, to protect frail residents, to help protect your own family, and to help stop the pandemic. Over the next several months, more vaccines will be available to the general community. The studies are showing that the vaccine works in more than 94% of people who received the vaccine in the trials.

We are finishing details and schedules for the vaccine clinic, and we expect to begin vaccinating staff and residents near the week of December 21. The clinic will make the vaccine available to all Jennings staff (including those serving in independent living) and those who provide contract services to residents, such as therapy.

How will you receive the vaccine? Jennings is working with CVS and Walgreens Pharmacies to give us our vaccines on-site. Each person will have a two-step vaccine: individuals will receive the first vaccine, then the booster approximately 2-3 weeks later.

Can we believe that a COVID-19 immunization will work? Medical professionals are saying that these vaccines will clearly prevent life-threatening complications or death from COVID-19. We already know that vaccines have wiped out other extreme viruses, like smallpox and polio. And we know that the influenza vaccine is also very effective. The trials of the new COVID-19 vaccine have been very, very successful, and this tells us that we should be very excited about using the vaccines to stop the pandemic.

What if I already had COVID-19? Medical professionals still strongly encourage you to get the vaccine even if you already had the virus. Your infection may offer some natural immunity, but no one knows how long that natural protection lasts or what risks you have if you get it again.

Is it safe to receive the vaccine? This is an important question on all our minds right now. We believe in the safety of the vaccine. So far, studies have monitored almost 50,000 people over several months after the vaccination. During these studies, doctors and researchers have not

seen anyone with dangerous side effects. With any vaccine, you might expect very slight side effect such as mild fatigue, soreness at the shot site, or a headache – all very normal.

Here is something else that might interest you: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess the safety of a vaccine. The COVID-19 trials have almost 50,000 participants, with no adverse (i.e. harmful) side effects. This suggests that **the vaccine is safe and far outweighs the danger of a COVID-19 infection**, especially for anyone at high risk. **The COVID-19 vaccine will not give you COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine is not made with the live virus.** This vaccine is made with proteins that force your body to have an immune response so that your body recognizes and fights the actual virus when you are exposed to it. By taking the vaccine you are protecting not only yourself but you are helping to protect others.

We have frequently-asked-questions on our web site and at our screening table for you, with more details about statistics and trials. Please call us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Allison Q. Salopeck
President and CEO

Frequently Asked Questions

You may wish to visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/ for ongoing updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Why are pharmacies providing the clinics for vaccines instead of Jennings? Pharmacies have been providing vaccines for about 10 years, since the H1N1 flu. The pharmacy partnership is important because they are already prepared with everything needed for the vaccine. They will also do all the data reporting needed, so our staff will not need to get extra supplies, take time for extra training or staff the clinics. The pharmacy will come to our locations with all that is needed.

Should I receive the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding? Please check with your physician for additional guidance.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine give me COVID-19? None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. (information from CDC)

How long does it take for the vaccine to work? Sometimes the vaccine process can cause mild symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal. They are a sign that the body is building immunity. It usually takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after receiving your vaccine. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection. (information from CDC)

Will the COVID-19 vaccine make me test positive on a COVID-19 test? Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. This is because antibody tests show you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results. (information from CDC)

Should I get the vaccine if I have already been sick with COVID-19? Yes. There are severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, so people are generally advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity you get from having an infection is called natural immunity, and it varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. (information from CDC)

How long will the vaccine give me immunity from COVID-19? We won't know how long the vaccine will give you immunity. We won't know until we have more data on how well it works. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important parts of COVID-19 studies that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new data becomes available. (information from CDC)

Will getting vaccinated help prevent me from getting sick with COVID-19? Yes. While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. Learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work. (information from CDC)

Will receiving an mRNA vaccine alter my DNA? No! mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid –we describe mRNA as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease. (information from CDC)

How is a vaccine developed and tested? Approval of a vaccine for use in people involves multiple phases with different goals for assessing effectiveness and safety in different populations. There are a total of 4 phases and the vaccine must meet very intense safety criteria before completing each phase. Once a vaccine is approved for use after phase 3, it has been tested in tens of thousands of people and if no significant harmful side effects are noted, it is considered safe for use. Phase 4 involves continued monitoring and gathering of safety data. This type of clinical trial has been used for decades to approve medications and vaccines.

Will I be able to stop wearing PPE if I am vaccinated? Jennings will follow the recommendations that we keep wearing a mask and appropriate PPE, physical distancing, and practicing hand washing until we know more results.

How will we know the vaccine safe? Safety is the most important requirement for vaccines, and it is assessed in trials by independent experts. FDA advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess safety. The current phase 3 trials had more than that minimum – they have had 30,000 to 50,000 participants. This really demonstrates how safety is a top priority for the FDA and the medical community. There are 2 advisory committees for the COVID-19 vaccine: (1) The Vaccine and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) that advises the FDA; (2) The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that advises the CDC. These advisory boards are independent. Their job is to monitor vaccines to ensure safety. They do this job regardless of money, politics, etc. The people on these committees are experts from academic institutions, and they are vetted to avoid a conflict of interest. Experts who may

have a conflict of interest do not participate on these committees. The committees evaluate the vaccine data for safety and efficacy, and also help to determine how it will be distributed.

What are some of the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? Will the vaccine make me sick? The vaccines tested in clinical trials can cause short-term mild 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. 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!