

COVID-19 Vaccine

Frequently Asked Questions

Over 15 million people are known to be infected with COVID-19 and the death statistics in seniors are astounding. The vaccine will be a game changer in knocking out COVID-19 in our Branches. Bickford has proactively entered the federal COVID-19 Vaccination program. We will have access to vaccine within the next few weeks.

We have also learned ONLY those Resident's and BFM's (employees) identified NOW will have access to the vaccination program. We have a small window to finalize our list of Residents and BFM's and once that list is completed, the window will close.

We know until vaccine is more widely available in the fall, you our valued BFM's are at continued risk and we strongly encourage and respectfully ask for your agreement to take the vaccine, not only to protect yourself, and your family, but to protect our Residents.

We have prepared the following FAQ to help answer the many questions you may have.

Why do we recommend our BFM's take the vaccine?

It keeps them well and protects them, and their family as well as our Resident's. It will allow them to keep working during the pandemic until the vaccine is widely available and the pandemic is under control.

How is the COVID-19 vaccine different from the annual flu vaccine?

This vaccine is made from genetic RNA material, that is produced synthetically, there is no virus in the vaccine. Traditional flu vaccines are made from virus that has been rendered harmless. The flu vaccine is traditionally 40-50% effective whereas the COVID-19 is more than 94% effective.

Are these new vaccines safe?

Yes, RNA vaccines have been used for about a decade. Many manufactures have been working on other types of coronavirus vaccines so were able to mobilize a vaccine for COVID-19. The FDA requires 3,000 participants to receive the vaccine before approval of the vaccine. Over 50,000 participants have received the COVID-19 vaccine. These vaccines have been proven to be over 94% effective and safe.

What are the side effects?

Only 2-3% of those vaccinated, experienced side effects, such as mild headache, body and joint aches and tiredness. The side effects are similar or slightly more pronounced with the second dose. Most side effects start anywhere from 12-24 hours after the dose and usually last for no more than a day or so. There are other very rare side effects.

Will we need to report any side effects from the vaccine?

Yes, we are required to report side effects.

Will Bickford require BFM's to take the vaccine?

No. However, we strongly recommend BFM's take the vaccine to protect themselves, those they love and care for, and our Residents. Bickford will continue to screen BFM's for symptoms and administer ongoing testing and quarantining requirements.

Should pregnant mothers take the vaccine?

This will need to be carefully managed by their health care provider, it is currently not approved for pregnancy.

If a BFM refuses the vaccine, becomes sick with COVID, and has no PTO available, will quarantine pay be covered by Bickford?

No. The BFM would be quarantined at home without pay.

Who will get the vaccine first?

Hospital, healthcare staff, and those working/residing in the long-term care and assisted living communities.

When will the vaccine become available to others?

We expect the vaccine will become available to those that have medical conditions, seniors, and other essential health care workers, in early spring. We hope that the vaccine will be widely available to others in the fall 2021.

How much vaccine will be available?

Initial estimates are enough vaccine for 10 million people in the first distribution. For this first round of vaccine two doses are required 21-28 days apart. Access to the vaccine will gain momentum as many more pharmaceutical companies bring their vaccines to market.

Are seniors more at risk if they, or others around them, do not get the vaccine?

Yes, death from COVID is the highest in those over the age of 65.

What happens if I don't take the covid vaccine series (two doses)?

Manufacturers have shown effective immunity in excess of 94% with two doses. If you do not take the series the vaccine may not be effective.

Will I get COVID-19 from the vaccine or give someone COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, because you are not vaccinated with the live coronavirus.

If I had COVID-19 do I still need to take the vaccine?

Yes, because we do not know how much immunity you acquired from being infected. We know the vaccine will provide you continued immunity and protection from re-infection.

Why should our Residents take the vaccine?

Our Residents are vulnerable and are more susceptible to infection and negative health outcomes. The vaccine will protect them, our BFM's, other Residents, their families, and friends from infection.

Can I change my mind if I want the vaccine?

You will need to make this decision quickly. **This is the ONLY access to the COVID-19 vaccine (in Dec 2020/Jan 2021) at Bickford.**

We do expect those working/residing in assisted living to have **limited access** to the vaccine through local health departments (HD). This may require BFM's or Resident's to go to the HD or designated location to receive the vaccine.

Will I be able to stop wearing a mask or social distancing once I receive the vaccine?

No, unfortunately until we have a significant reduction in infection and the population vaccinated these requirements will continue.

After Residents and BFM's receive the vaccine, what does this mean for Bickford COVID precautions? Do screenings continue? Do we allow entertainment, outings, etc.?

Screening will continue into the foreseeable future. We will follow the guidance of Local, State and Federal regulatory agencies as they relate to Resident activities.

Will the established FDA approval process be used for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Absolutely. The FDA follows stringent criteria for approving vaccines and will follow the same established process for the COVID-19 vaccine.

What does FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) mean?

This means the vaccine is approved for use - and establishes parameters of safe administration based on the research data from the clinical trials.

How was the vaccine produced so quickly?

A worldwide Pandemic allowed for many countries to release emergency funds as well as donated funds from other industries to accelerate the speed of development of the vaccine. We also saw an unprecedented collaboration of top scientists from around the world, (i.e., CDC, World Health Organization, National Institutes of Health) working closely with each other and the pharmaceutical industry.

For more information from the CDC:

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