Q: How is it decided which sector falls in which phase and tier?
A: Monterey County Health Department is following the phases and tiers outlined in California's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan.

Q: Is there a difference between vaccines received and administered into arms?
A: Yes. Because the supply of COVID-19 is currently unreliable, vaccinating agencies must receive doses before they can schedule vaccine clinics to avoid cancellations and rescheduling.

Q: Who is ordering vaccines for each community?
A: Vaccines are allocated on a county level by CDPH. Medical providers who serve particular communities can apply to CDPH to receive a portion of Monterey County’s allocation of COVID-19 vaccine. The Health Department approves local providers orders for vaccine submitted to CDPH.

Q: Does the County order all vaccine that it can?
A: Monterey County Health Department orders the maximum number of doses allocated by CDPH to the County.

Q: Will the Health Department need to know how many individuals are in their industry in order to order the vaccines?
A: No. CDPH determines the number of doses Monterey County can receive each week based on CDPH’s estimates of the number of individuals in phases and tiers currently open for vaccination and the amount of vaccine available from the federal government.

Q: Are private health care offices being proactively contacted to schedule getting the vaccine? If not, do they contact the health department?
A: Monterey County has released multiple Health Alerts and Updates for providers regarding COVID-19 vaccine. If medical providers did not receive the Health Updates with the information, they can submit their practice’s information at: https://myturn.ca.gov/

Q: How does the notification portal work for the public versus people working from home? Will it ask for location where people live or work?
A: Employers completing the notification form are asked to identify individuals at their business at increased risk of occupational exposure. Employers are asked the name of the agency for whom they are submitting the request and their industry sector. For individual members of the public, individuals are asked to include information about special considerations.

Q: When do you estimate we will move into Phase 1b?
A: On January 26, the County moved to Phase 1b Tier 1 for those 75 years of age and older only. It is not possible to give a date certain when we will transition further in Phase 1b. It will depend on vaccine supply which has not been dependable. Please check Monterey County Health Department website for announcements and updates.

Q: Is there a plan to leverage other resources to support vaccinating our populations, such as nursing students? What efforts are being done to reach out to these types of folks?
A: Nursing students are involved in vaccination right now. There are partnerships with other entities that can vaccinate. For example, Visiting Nurses Association, the hospitals, and primary care providers. There is also an option for people to submit a Health Department volunteer application for those who have healthcare job experience.

Q: I have an underlying health condition. Am I eligible for a vaccine now?
A: The County is following California’s COVID-19 Vaccine Plan. Individuals aged 75 and older are eligible for a vaccine as of January 25 regardless of underlying health conditions. Individuals aged 16-49 with an underlying health condition or disability which increases their risk of severe COVID-19 complications are eligible for vaccination in Phase 1c.

WEEKLY FAQs
Q: How will I know when it’s my turn to get a vaccine?
A: The County will push information out through the media, online and via county social media accounts. As the rollout continues, people with primary care physicians may hear directly from those offices when the vaccine is available to them. On Jan. 14, the county launched an online portal for members of the public to indicate interest – but not to schedule an appointment – in getting a vaccine. The portal is available at montereycountycovid19.com.

Q: Will I be able to sign up for an appointment when it is my turn?
A: Yes, people may sign up for appointments if they meet current eligibility criteria for an appointment by calling their primary care provider or by accessing the portal for community clinics at www.montereycountycovid19.com.

In Phase 1b, people ages 75 and up may be able to make reservations by phone, if they do not use a computer or smartphone. Pay attention to the county’s website for updated information and watch for news reports on potential sign-ups and availability of this service.

Q: How long will it take for the people in each phase and tier to be vaccinated?
A: At this time, there is no way to gauge how quickly the county will move through the tiers. The amount of vaccine available to the county differs from week to week, making advance planning for clinics impossible, which in turn makes it impossible for the county to say just when people in subsequent tiers will be able to be vaccinated.

Q: Will I need to show some kind of proof that I am eligible for a certain tier?
A: In Phase 1a, the county is requiring people to bring a pay stub or some form of ID to show they are health care workers. As people in different age groups are vaccinated, they will need to show a driver’s license or some other form of ID with a birthdate.

Medical privacy rules prohibit vaccine administrators from asking people about their medical conditions, so in the case of people with underlying conditions (people ages 16-74 who have underlying conditions that make them vulnerable to Covid-19 are in Phase 1c), they will most likely be on their honor.

Q: Why is the county’s vaccination timeline not the same as the state’s?
A: Changes are happening very quickly at the national and state levels. Monterey County Health Department is following the state’s guidelines, but only after receiving an official communication from CDPH advising the county of the change. It’s possible that the state will announce a change ahead of sending a notice to county health officials.

Q: My employer says that our profession is now cleared to receive vaccinations, but the county isn’t vaccinating us yet.
A: County officials wait for an official statement from the CDPH, and sometimes that statement comes after someone at the state has communicated with employers or trade associations. Additionally, there have been a couple of instances of miscommunication regarding eligibility for vaccine. Please keep checking our website for updates www.montereycovid19.org.

Q: Where do essential workers, like grocery store employees and farmworkers, fall on the vaccination list?
A: Essential workers in the food and agriculture industry will be able to be vaccinated under Phase 1b, Tier 1 – although only those considered at highest risk of exposure will be vaccinated. As of January 25, only 75 and older individuals are eligible for vaccination in Phase 1b, Tier 1 per State guidance.

Q: What about teachers and child care workers?
A: The county is in talks with the Monterey County Office of Education to organize how vaccinations will occur throughout the various districts and schools. Those considered at greatest risk for exposure fall under Phase 1b, Tier 1. As of January 25, only 75 and older individuals are eligible for vaccination in Phase 1b, Tier 1 per State guidance.

Q: Will teachers be vaccinated ahead of schools reopening?
A: Monterey County Health Officer Edward Moreno said during a virtual town hall on Jan. 14 that the guidelines for reopening schools do not include vaccinations as a requirement.

Q: Can someone under the age of 18 receive the vaccine?
A: The FDA has approved the use of the Moderna vaccine on anyone 18 years of age and older and the use of the Pfizer vaccine on anyone 16 years of age and older.

Q: Where will vaccinations occur?
A: This depends on who is administering/receiving the vaccines. For example, pharmacists from Walgreens and CVS are visiting long-term care facilities, as part of a federal partnership agreement. Recently, the Monterey Fire Department held clinics for other firefighters and paramedics (Phase 1a Tier I) at its main station in Monterey. Clinics for health care workers (Phase 1a) have been taking place at CSU Monterey Bay, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, Natividad, Mee Memorial Health Care System, Clinica de Salud del Valle de Salinas. Primary care and urgent care clinics are also being used to vaccinate health care workers in Phase 1a.

As vaccine becomes more readily available, we’ll see clinics at other locations like senior centers and large employers, for example. It’s expected that large pharmacy chains may offer vaccinations as well.

Q: Are there going to be enough workers to administer vaccines and run clinics?
A: The county and the state are working on finding more licensed individuals who may administer the vaccines, in addition to relying on nonprofit agencies and clinics that have traditionally administered flu shots. The state recently approved licensed dentists and medical students to serve as vaccinators. For complete list of approved licenses, check CDPH website. Monterey County has created a way for retired doctors and nurses to volunteer, with an electronic sign-up on the county’s job website: governmentjobs.com/careers/montereycounty.

Q: What will my vaccine cost?
A: The vaccine is provided at no cost to recipients, paid for by taxpayers through the federal government. The agency, physician or pharmacy administering the vaccine may charge someone an administration fee, which in turn may be covered by health insurance. For uninsured people, the entity giving the vaccine can get the fee reimbursed through a federal fund.

VACCINE SECOND DOSE QUESTIONS

Q: What happens if I miss or am late for the second dose of the series?
A: If you miss your second dose appointment, you should reschedule as soon as possible preferably with the same entity that provided first dose. Both doses are needed for full protection. A single dose conveys a lower degree of protection from the virus than two doses. There is no reason to schedule a third dose if the second is received late.

Q: Can I take my dose early if I have a scheduling conflict?
A: The CDC indicates that it is safe to administer vaccines up to four days early. Anything beyond that should be considered an error and reported (to your healthcare provider or directly to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System).

Q: What if I get infected with COVID-19 after the first dose of vaccine but before the second one? Will I need to wait and retake the first dose or just get the second?
A: There is no need to retake the first dose. Wait for 10 days after last symptoms and then take the second dose of vaccine on your previously scheduled date, or any time after the second dose date IF the second dose date falls before the isolation period has ended.

Q: Once individuals have received the 2nd dose, do they still need to quarantine for 10 days if exposed to a COVID positive case?
A: Yes. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build protection against the virus following vaccination. Also, while there is strong evidence that the vaccine protects most people against symptomatic COVID-19, we do not know for sure whether the vaccine prevents transmission of the virus. For these reasons, it is still particularly important for those who have received the vaccine to watch for symptoms and adhere to all quarantine protocols.