

## THE GARDENS *at Park Balboa*

# COVID-19 Vaccination: The Next Step in Preventing Infection

COVID-19 prevention has been part of our daily lives for nearly a year, now, and finally vaccines are being distributed. The Gardens at Park Balboa residents and associates are among the first groups to have access to a COVID-19.



“Residents of assisted living facilities are very vulnerable to COVID-19 infection and we believe it is vital that all residents and staffers do our parts to reduce our risks by vaccinating against the virus now that it is our turn,” said Garret Loube, President

Plans for a rollout in every one of our eligible communities are already underway. Soon you will be receiving consent paperwork and we will be scheduling dates where registered nurses will come to our buildings and do the first round of the two shot vaccination for everyone who has completed the necessary documentation. The next series will follow in approximately 3-4 weeks depending on which vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna, we end up receiving. It is also critical that people who get the first dose follow through with the second, as only two doses have been proved to provide the most effective protection.

While we’re thrilled to have this new tool for COVID-19 prevention, The Gardens at Park Balboa will continue to take precautions in our communities to help keep residents safe, including the use of personal protective equipment, testing as directed by local health authorities and enhanced cleaning protocols.

**When will a COVID-19 vaccine be widely available to the public?**

The CDC and state authorities determine the priority of vaccines according to different risk groups. While residents and workers at assisted care facilities are relatively high priority, other members of your extended family and friends may be higher or lower priority depending on their risk factors. We are currently anticipating first doses to our residents in mid-to-late February. Others will not be able to receive the vaccine until late spring or early summer. That is why we recommend that all our staff and residents take advantage of the offer to vaccinate now, while it is available to us.

**What are the side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated, according to the [CDC](#). Note that your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own. Some people report getting a headache or fever when getting a vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It's working and building up protection against disease.

**Is it true you need two doses of the vaccine?**

Yes. Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the U.S. require two shots. The first one starts building protection, but everyone will have to have a second one a few weeks later to get the most protection the vaccine can offer.

**Isn't it better to get immunity from actually having COVID-19 than it is to get immunity from a vaccine?**

No. The [CDC](#) says getting the COVID-19 vaccine is the safer choice. While scientists are still learning more about the virus, the current advice is that COVID-19 has caused serious illness and death for many, many people and if you get it, you also risk giving it to your loved ones, who may get very sick.

**Can individuals pay to be one of the first to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

No. Vaccines are being administered according to the federal government's carefully planned priority list. We are pleased to be able to get the vaccine relatively early.

**Why aren't hand-washing and social distancing enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19?**

If you made it this far without getting COVID-19 that points to the effectiveness of those measures. But to return to normal from our current state of things we need to use many different methods to stop a pandemic, including vaccines. The [CDC](#) points out that vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. But washing hands and using hand sanitizer, maintaining social distance, and wearing face masks help reduce your chances of being exposed or of spreading the virus to others.

**I already had COVID-19. Do I need to be vaccinated, still?**

If you had COVID-19, experts say you should still receive the vaccine because it is unknown how long any immunity from the disease lasts from natural infection. The vaccine is expected to provide longer-lasting protection than natural immunity.

**My caregiver said that she’s not going to get the vaccine. Why should I get it if she doesn’t?**

Our corporate policy is that all caregivers must get the vaccine unless they fall into a few very narrow exceptions. We are doing that to protect our clients, like you. Please encourage anyone you hear saying things like that that it’s important that we ALL do what we can to protect each other.

**Will I be able to immediately return to “normal” after the vaccine and go shopping or visiting relatives?**

The vaccine provides approximately 95% protection from COVID-19 but is not 100-percent. Our expectation is that having a large number of people immunized against COVID-19 will help reduce the overall level of infection in our communities but will not result in an immediate return to the way things were before March 2020. That will require some patience and ongoing diligence with masks and other measures.

**The Gardens at Park Balboa**

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