



# ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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## **Health Department to Begin Administering Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine** *Adjustments Still Necessary for Second Dose Appointments Based on Supply*

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) today announced that it will begin administering the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at its Castle Shannon Point of Dispensing (POD) next week. ACHD received four trays of the Pfizer vaccine for first shots. The Pfizer vaccine differs slightly from the Moderna vaccine. It is also a two-shot series, but the second shot can be administered in a 21 to 42-day window.

There will be limited first dose appointments available at the Castle Shannon site for individuals aged 65 and older ONLY for the week of March 1. Online links will be made available tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. through Allegheny Alerts and will be posted shortly after on ACHD's vaccine page at <https://alleghenycounty.us/COVIDvaccine>. Appointments for individuals who do not have access to the internet may be made through 2-1-1 beginning at 9 a.m. as well.

All appointments are for the Castle Shannon VFD Banquet Hall at 3600 Library Road. Appointments are required. There is no on-site registration or walk-up appointments. Any person arriving at the site without an appointment, or who is not 65 and older, will be turned away.

Second dose clinics of Moderna vaccine are being scheduled for individuals who received their first doses at the Monroeville vaccination clinic between February 1 and 4 and are due for their second doses between March 1 and 4. Emails with links containing second dose registration links will be sent out later today with those individuals vaccinated next week at the Monroeville site.

The links sent are for second doses only, and the doses available through these links have been set aside to fulfill second dose needs. These links are intended for use by only those individuals due for second doses at the Monroeville vaccination clinic on those days and should not be forwarded to others. Anyone who makes an appointment using one of those links who was not an intended recipient will have their appointment canceled and will be turned away at the Monroeville vaccination clinic.

If an individual is due for their second dose between March 1 and 4 at the Monroeville vaccination clinic and did not receive an email containing links, they should call 2-1-1 to register for their appointment by phone.

Additional Points of Dispensing (PODs) for other Phase 1A healthcare and frontline staff that were scheduled last week have now been rescheduled. The initiative for vaccination at senior housing will also continue the week of March 1 at four sites throughout the county. Individuals who missed their first dose appointments due to weather on February 16 will also be contacted to have their appointment rescheduled for the coming week.

Individuals who received their first doses at the Monroeville vaccination clinic on February 5 and 6 will receive an email next week with additional information regarding their appointments. While those appointments may not be available on the 28<sup>th</sup> day, all individuals will receive their second dose within the CDC-recommended guidance of up to 6 weeks after the first dose.

Again, this announcement affects only individuals who received their vaccines through ACHD and not individuals who received their vaccines through other providers. The state has assured providers that the appropriate supply of doses will be available. Individuals who need to schedule their second dose should work with the provider or location where they received the first dose. Requests for a second dose cannot be accommodated by other providers.

The Health Department will continue to schedule the second vaccine in the series for individuals who received their first vaccine from an ACHD POD. While the recent announcement by the state may mean that there may be some delay in when the second vaccine is administered, these potential changes remain in line with guidance from the CDC which recommends that vaccines may be administered up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose.

It is important to note that there is no difference between a first and second dose of the vaccine. While the language that has been used to talk about the vaccine series has referred to “first shot” and “second shot,” these vaccinations are identical. A person who receives a “second shot” will be given the same vaccine and dose as they received for their “first shot.” It is the same vaccine and dose, provided the same way, both times.

The reference to first or second pertains to supply chain management. It does not reflect different medications or anything else that would impact the health of a person being vaccinated. When applied to an individual, it simply indicates whether it’s that person’s first or second shot in the series. Again, they are identical.

Anyone with questions regarding COVID-19, the vaccine or scheduling their second dose should call 2-1-1 for more information and to be connected to available resources.

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