

Mission

United Community,
Empowered People,
Exceptional Health

Vision

Provide the best
patient-centered care in
the Pacific Northwest

Values

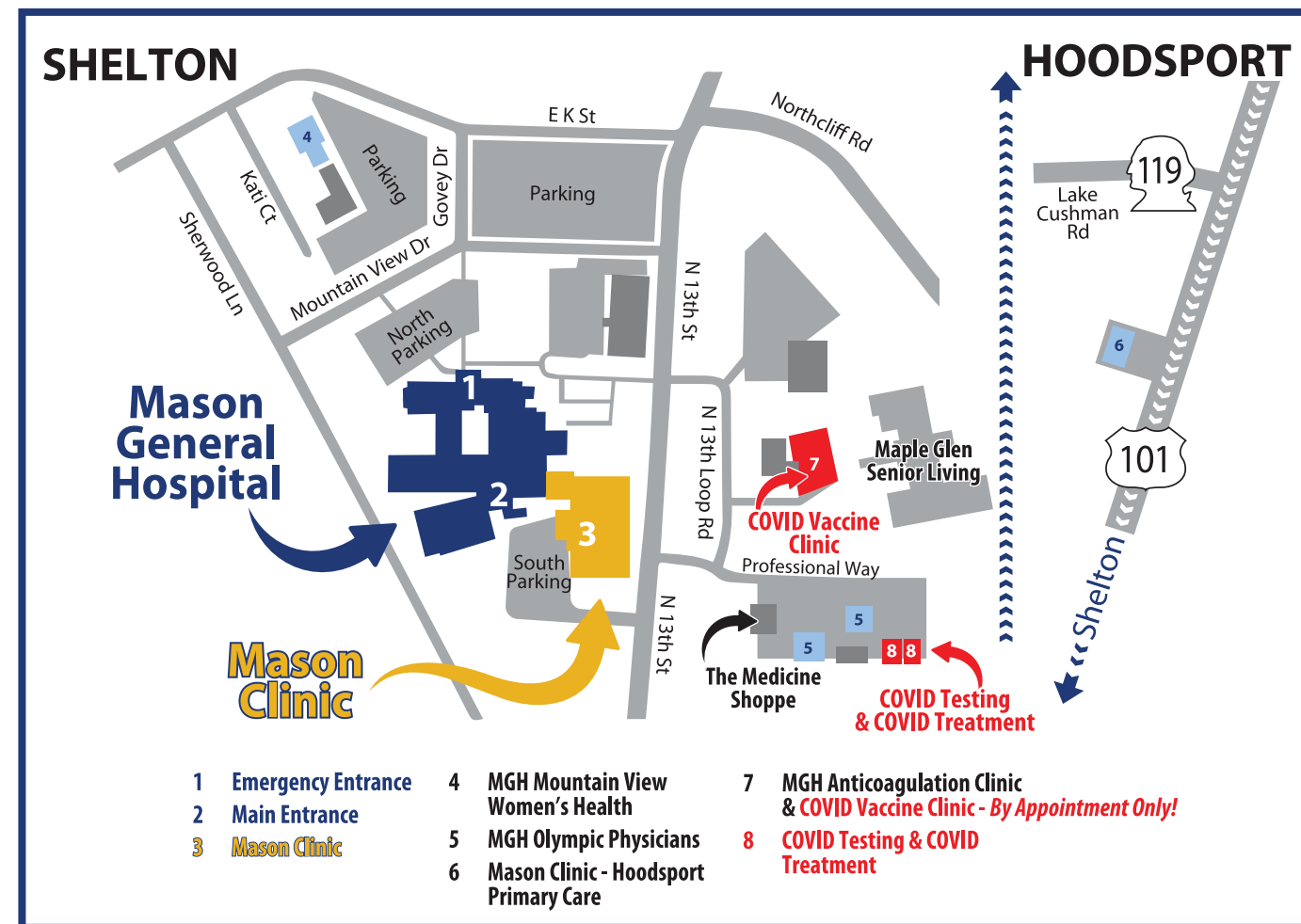
Service &
Relationships



Mason Health

Mason General Hospital • Mason Clinic

COVID-19 Vaccination Q&A



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Thank you for choosing Mason Health and contacting us about receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. The purpose of this brochure is to keep you informed and to answer many of the frequently asked questions about the vaccine. As a trusted health care resource for more than 50 years, we want you to know that we are eager accommodate your health care needs and to vaccinate everyone in our community. We hope that this information helps you to navigate the path to obtaining a COVID vaccination as soon as possible. Thank you.

Gayle Weston, President
Board of Hospital Commissioners

Q. How is the vaccination process going by Mason Health and how many people have been able to be vaccinated?

A. As of Feb. 9, 2021, Mason Health has vaccinated more than 4,800 people. We expect to vaccinate 1,000 people per week, both at Mason Health facilities and by supporting Mason County's mass vaccination events.

Q. Who can be vaccinated now?

A. Mason Health is continuing to vaccinate individuals who qualify for Washington's Phase 1, A1 guidelines, which include health care workers (nurses, physicians, pharmacists, dental staff, etc.), EMS/Fire, long-term care facility staff and patients. Starting Jan. 18, Mason Health is also vaccinating eligible Mason County residents and Mason Health patients in Phase 1, B1, which includes those who are 65 years old and older and those who are 50 and older who live in a multigenerational household.

Mason Health and Mason County must follow the vaccine distribution plans as outlined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Washington state, which includes this prioritized, phased approach to vaccination.

As demand is high and vaccine availability is limited, you may experience wait times in getting an appointment. Our goal is to work with the county to get all eligible community members vaccinated as quickly as possible, while recognizing the rollout will take time. Thank you in advance and we appreciate your understanding and patience.

Q. I am a Mason County resident or Mason Health patient and I am eligible for the vaccine under the state's guidelines. How do I schedule my vaccination appointment?

A. At this time, all available Mason Health COVID vaccination appointments have been scheduled for at least two months. You may experience delays in getting an appointment until we are certain we will have vaccine available.

Mason Health is actively supporting planned mass vaccination drive-thru clinics being planned and directed by Mason County Public Health. We will share the details about these events as they are confirmed.

Q. In between doses, do I still need to maintain precautions such as mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing?

A. Yes. Initial studies looked at people who developed COVID symptoms after getting vaccinated, and we know that was a very low number. They did not study whether people had the virus but showed no symptoms, which is a common thing with this particular disease. Until we have more experience with this disease and the vaccine, the logical thing to do is to continue with the precautions on the chance you could spread the virus to the general population.

Q. After the second dose is it still recommended to maintain precautions such as mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing?

A. Yes, until we better understand better how the vaccine performs with asymptomatic or potentially asymptomatic carriers.

Q. The creation of these vaccines happened at a rapid pace and we are still learning more. Do we have a sense of how long the vaccine's shelf life is for a human?

A. At this point we don't and that is why we are going to continue masking and social distancing and that is why it is recommended that even people who have had COVID receive the vaccine because we don't know how long their immunity is good for. We will learn that with time and we will release that information.

Q. Have you noticed any side effects from the vaccine?

A. Side effects have been very minimal and mimic some of usual effects you might have from the flu shot. You can get a sore arm and this is what we have heard from the bulk of the 3,000 people we have vaccinated. The side effects profile has been very good and better than what

has been shown in the initial trials. Feeling tired has been a common complaint, as has arm pain and some low-grade fevers. These do not last long. We have not seen dangerous side effects that were reported very, very sparsely. This is our immune system making antibodies and memory cells that will fight COVID.

Q. With these vaccines antibodies are created. Can we use these antibodies to help others?

A. We have not heard of anyone harvesting antibodies from patients that have been vaccinated.

Q. Phase 1, B1 is says people over 50 and those with multi-generational families can get the vaccine. Can you share what that means?

A. Those that are 50 and older and are not able to live independently and are receiving long-term care from a caregiver or are living with someone who works outside of the home or someone over the age of 50 caring for a grandchild.

Q. With all the theories going on out there, what would you like everyone to know regarding the safety of the mRNA vaccines and the conspiracy theories surrounding it?

A. This is not new technology, it has been around for eight years, and has been used for other reasons, largely around cancer research. It has absolutely no interaction with your DNA because it does not get into the nucleus of your cells. It goes to a different part of your cell where it begins to generate protein antibodies. It is also recommended by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology that pregnant women not be turned away from the vaccine. The vaccine has not been studied in pregnant or breastfeeding women, but the benefit may outweigh the risk and so far there have not been any reported problems in pregnant women. There is no impact on your fertility. There are no microchips in the vial.

Q. Not only was this gone through the FDA, but the Western states banded together to certify this. What extra layer of comfort should this provide to people?

A. This was an extraordinary step with a scientific approach to look at the data. The states wanted to assure the public that the vaccine was safe. Not only did the FDA go through their own approval process, which is quite thorough, but the Western states put together an independent board of epidemiologists and virologists to look at the data very critically with an independent eye and make their own determinations as to whether or not this vaccine was safe and effective.

Q. We have heard about herd immunity and if a larger majority of people get this disease we can achieve herd immunity. Can we achieve herd immunity with or without this vaccine?

A. Once we get a critical mass of people vaccinated, we will get to herd immunity. You can look at other diseases like mumps and measles where the population has been immunized and you can see where it fails is when people refuse to get vaccinated. That is where you see outbreaks because the herd immunity fails and the herd is no longer immune. Sweden lagged behind other countries in taking precautions with the belief that herd immunity would prevail, however, the country is now seeing a low rate of immunity and high death rates compared to their Scandinavian neighbors. What that tells us is this 2-dose vaccination approach, which is very well-studied, shows immunity through vaccination is the way out of this. Natural immunity is not the way out of this.

Q. Where can people find vaccination information?

A. Mason Health's website is the best place to go. We still have patients to care for and COVID positive patients in our hospital, our clinics are very busy handling the day-to-day health needs of our community. We are trying to vaccinate every person in the community but that being said, we have 60,000+ people in the county and we have limited resources to provide this. Everyone's patience is greatly appreciated.

Other Resources and Information:

- For information on community vaccine events and other vaccine updates and information, please check the Mason Health website (www.masongeneral.com/about/covid-19) and social media, as well as Mason County's website (www.co.mason.wa.us/COVID-19/index.php) for important community updates and information.
- To learn more about event locations and other information from the State of Washington, visit www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/VaccineLocations
- COVID-19 information and message lines are available through Mason County: (360) 427-9670, Extension 599 and Mason Health: (360) 427-2395

Working together as one United Community, we will overcome this public health crisis. In the meantime, please help us stop the spread of COVID-19: wear your mask, social distance, and frequently wash your hands. Thank you and please be healthy and well!