

Important COVID Vaccine Information for San Juan County Seniors

How will COVID vaccines be provided in our community?

Vaccines will be available over the coming months to all San Juan County residents but it will take many months for everyone to be vaccinated. Some individuals will receive their vaccine at SJC Health & Community Services clinics while others will receive them via local health care providers and pharmacies who may offer individual appointments and/or clinics. San Juan County is currently hosting clinics on Lopez, Orcas and San Juan Island. Clinics will be hosted on some other islands once more vaccine doses are available. Information on eligibility and availability of vaccines is continually changing, so please check the SJC website (www.sanjuanco.com/1737/COVID-Vaccine-Info), the Health & Community Services Facebook page and local news sources regularly for the latest updates. If you have family members, friends or neighbors without Internet access or computers, please help keep them informed and help them make vaccine appointments when they are eligible and appointments are available. Please do not call the SJC Health Department; staff are extremely busy with regular services and programs, and COVID response and vaccine clinics, and cannot book vaccine appointments.

When will you be eligible for a vaccine?

Most Phase 1a individuals have received their first vaccines in our community and we have started to vaccinate Phase 1b—Tier 1 eligible individuals. Thousands of individuals in our county are in Phase 1b-Tier 1 so it will take some time to get all these individuals vaccinated. Please be patient.

Who is eligible for Phase 1b—Tier 1?

- Anyone over the age of 65
- Those over the age of 50 living in a multigenerational household. There are two categories of people who are eligible under this definition:
 - People who are (a) over the age of 50 AND (b) are not able to live independently who either:
 - a) receive long-term care from a paid/unpaid caregiver, or
 - b) live with someone who works outside the home
 - People who are over the age of 50 AND are living with and caring for a grandchild

No one under age 50 is eligible in Phase 1b-Tier 1, and no one over age 50 caring for a partner, friend, or child (exception -grandchild) is eligible.

For more information on eligibility, please check the SJC COVID webpage (www.sanjuanco.com/1737/COVID-Vaccine-Info) and the Washington State COVID website (www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine).

WA State Department of Health has an online tool that enables individuals to evaluate their phase eligibility and print out or screenshot an approval verification that documents eligibility. That online tool is at: <http://www.findyourphasewa.org/>

How to sign-up for a vaccine when you are eligible:

- Once local medical providers and pharmacies are offering vaccines, you may receive your vaccine through them depending on availability and if you are an existing client. There will be announcements so do not call them at this time; check their websites and local media for updates.
- Registration for San Juan County hosted clinics is currently available online through the County website (www.sanjuanco.com/1737/COVID-Vaccine-Info) on a first come, first serve basis for eligible individuals. Follow the instructions on this webpage to verify eligibility and book an appointment. Appointments are filling up quickly; if the website indicates there are no appointments, check back when it indicates new appointments will be opened. There is no waitlist so you must keep checking for an appointment slot. Every individual needs their OWN appointment slot. Please use your legal name to register.
- When you sign up for your first appointment, you will also be automatically registering for your second dose appointment time (usually 28 days later). Make sure you are able to attend BOTH appointments so you can get your second dose at the appropriate time.
- If you do not have Internet or computer access and no family or friends to assist you to book online, you may contact your local SJC Senior Services Specialist or Family/Community Resource Center for assistance and updated information. Leave your contact information when you call and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

What to Expect When You Come to Your Vaccine Appointment

If you are to receive your vaccine via your regular medical provider or a local pharmacy clinic, please follow their instructions. If you are signed up for a San Juan County Health & Community Services hosted vaccine clinic, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- **It is VERY IMPORTANT that you come to your scheduled appointments and arrive on time.** Leave enough time to park, walk to the clinic entrance, and check-in. For those without transportation, please ask a friend, neighbor or family member to transport you or arrange a taxi or shuttle service ahead of time. If you cannot make your appointment time or are going to be very late (more than 15 minutes), please contact us asap at 360-378-4474. Doses are limited and provided to us in batches that must be prepared for each clinic so we don't want to waste any. We are currently providing the Moderna vaccine.
- Minimize the items you bring with you into the clinic; we need to keep the clinic area as clean and sterile as possible so there will not be tables for you to place items on. You will be given a clipboard, pen and some paperwork to fill out so you will need your hands free. If you wear glasses to read, bring them so you can read the one-page form you will need to fill out. Bring your id or if you confirmed your eligibility online, bring your confirmation printout or screen shot with you. There is no charge for the vaccine at the SJC clinics. (Other providers may have a co-pay fee.)
- Remember to wear a mask to the appointment! Wear a jacket or warm sweater in case it is cold in the building. The vaccine shot will be given in your upper arm area near your shoulder so make sure you are wearing clothing that allows easy access to this area by taking off your jacket/sweater and rolling up your shirt sleeve.
- When you arrive, you will check in and be given some paperwork (one form to fill out that will be kept by the health department and two information sheets to take home). You will then listen to a short announcement before it is your turn to be vaccinated. Staff and volunteers will be available to answer questions.
- After you have been vaccinated, you will be given a small card with your vaccine information and next appointment date. (Keep this card in a safe place and bring it to your second appointment.) You will receive a reminder call or email for your next appointment but we recommend posting the date and time in a visible place as a reminder. After being vaccinated, you will sit in a waiting area (socially distanced) for either 15 or 30 minutes to ensure you do not have an allergic reaction to the vaccine; there will be a medical professional monitoring individuals in this area. (Bring your epi-pen if you have one.) After this time period, you will be free to leave. Please allow approximately an hour to get your vaccine and be monitored.
- You may have some mild symptoms in the days following your vaccine. For example, some individuals have had a sore arm around the injection site for a couple days. These symptoms usually indicate that your immune system is working to build resilience against the virus. The information sheets you will take home have more details on this topic.
- Accommodations will be made for those with mobility, vision and/or other challenges. If you use a wheelchair, walker or cane, you can bring them with you into the clinic. If you need assistance, a friend, family member or caregiver may accompany you. If you are alone and need assistance, let us know and we will help you.
- **Remember that you are NOT immediately protected from the virus! You must continue to wear masks when around others and socially distance.** You do not have protection from the virus until a couple weeks after your second dose. Even after people start to get second vaccine doses, it is important that we ALL continue as a community to wear masks and socially distance for some time to protect those who have not yet been vaccinated and to avoid confusion and anxiety as to who has and hasn't been vaccinated. We are in this together so let's continue to support each other until we ALL have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated! Our community actions and support for one another have greatly contributed to the low number of COVID cases in our county... let's keep it that way! #OurIslandsTogether