

## COVID19 VACCINES PROJECTED TIMELINE

By

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Four different pharmaceutical companies have applied for emergency FDA approval of their COVID19 vaccines. These vaccines use a snippet of the virus's mRNA sequence that is common to both the California and Florida strains. There is going to be a very high demand for the vaccines as the hospital ICU beds are in critical short supply. There has been a spike in COVID-19 cases since Thanksgiving. Orange county has seen the drop of the available ICU beds to below 15%, Los Angeles county to 10.9%, and California statewide down to 13.9%. Dr. Fauci commented that our best hope is the vaccines.

The two front runners are the vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna. Both vaccines have a 95% success rate. The Pfizer vaccine will involve two shots. It is more complex to store and administer. The first shot does not provide any immunity. It kicks in one week after the second shot is administered. Moderna vaccine is only one shot and it is much easier to handle and store. The immunity develops one week after the vaccine administration as well.

No vaccine or medicine comes without side effects. They include injection side reaction, low grade fever, general malaise, and hangover-like headache. Four of Pfizer vaccine trial volunteers developed Bell's Facial Palsy which was treated and resolved. None reported getting the COVID-19 virus from the vaccines. The benefits of the vaccines outweigh the risk of getting the COVID-19 infection. You should still get the seasonal flu vaccine to protect yourself from a possible twin-demic. Once you are vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccines, you should still practice social distancing, use personal protection equipment and proper hygiene until most of the population is vaccinated and developed the antibodies. The immunity after getting vaccinated will only last for about 9 months. Therefore, this vaccine will have to be on an annual basis. There is no pediatric indication for either one of the COVID-19 vaccines. If you already had the COVID-19 infection, your own immune system has developed the antibodies which only last about 3 months. Therefore, you will still need to be vaccinated.

The FDA has established the guidelines as to who will be vaccinated first. The front-line healthcare workers will be followed by convalescent hospitals and correctional facilities as they are high breeding grounds for COVID-19. They will be followed by high-risk patients, and finally by the rest of the population. Vaccinations for general population should start by the end of March.

Your family doctor will be the best person to advise you and keep a waiting list to notify you when your turn comes up.