

## The SLOW ROLLOUT of the COVID 19 Vaccine for Seniors

Older adults are at higher risk for severe COVID-19, as well as other viral and bacterial illnesses. Older adults are at increased risk for severe disease, and the older you are the more elevated your risk. Those in their 60s and 70s are at greater risk than those in their 50s, and people 85 and older are at the greatest risk, according to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Senior Citizens are more susceptible because older adults are at an increased risk for severe effects from viral and bacterial infections, from flu to colds to shingles to pneumonia. With age, the immune system becomes slower to respond to a threat like an infection, so you're more likely to get sick and develop more severe symptoms. Because you have fewer immune cells, it may take longer to recover.

Older adults are also more likely to have health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes. Other conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 in people of any age include chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a weakened immune system due to an organ transplant, obesity, serious heart conditions, and sickle cell disease in people of any age, the CDC says. A host of other issues, including moderate-to-severe asthma, high blood pressure, and liver disease may also hike the risk.

For Seniors aged 65 and older it is important to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending that people get vaccinated against COVID-19—especially older adults.

While you are patiently waiting to receive your vaccine, taking certain precautions can significantly reduce your chances of catching COVID-19, as well as other infectious illnesses. When you interact with others try to limit your in-person interactions with other people as much as possible, particularly when indoors; Keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about 2 arm lengths); Wash your hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol; Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Then wash your hands; Clean and disinfect surfaces and things you touch often. To learn more on how to protect yourself consult the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health for specific and up-to-date information about our community and how to stay safe.

Even after people get both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, they must remain vigilant at protecting themselves from catching the virus and spreading it to others. Everyone needs to continue to maintain social distancing, wear face masks, and practice proper hand hygiene.

As you are all aware there are currently 2 types of COVID-19 Vaccines currently available in the United States: Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. Pfizer is given as 2-shot vaccination 21 days apart and Moderna is given as 2-shot vaccination 28 days apart. CDC guidance states that you can still receive your second dose up to 6 weeks after the first dose.

The roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine has been very slow and unpredictable. Hazle Drugs is very persistently trying to ensure that we have enough vaccine to help immunize our community, which was one of the hardest hit areas in the state. This is a GREAT challenge. Hazle Drugs has vaccinated many patients for their first dose and we were told by the Pennsylvania Department of Health that these patients would be GUARANTEED to receive their second dose at the appropriate time, but these vaccines were NEVER sent to us. We were also told that more first doses of the Moderna vaccine would

also begin to be released, but again, that has not yet happened. We are very frustrated because of the slow response to this crisis. We appreciate everyone's cooperation as we wait for the Pennsylvania Department of Health to send us the supply of vaccines we need to help protect our community, that we have been part of for over 153 years!

Please visit [hazleddrugs.com](http://hazleddrugs.com) for more information regarding our vaccine information and request form.

*Bill Spear, R.Ph., CCN is an Immunization Certified Pharmacist, Compounding Pharmacist and Certified Clinical Nutritionist.*

*He is available for personal Nutritional Consultations at  
Hazle Drugs 1 E. Broad St. Hazleton, Pa. 18201, (570)-454-2476*

*Call for more information or to schedule your  
Nutritional Consultation today!*