

What you need to know as COVID-19 vaccination efforts continue in Arizona

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Valley doctor breaks down the difference between COVID-19 vaccines



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WHICH VACCINE SHOULD YOU GET?
VALLEY DOCTOR EXPLAINS SUBTLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PFIZER & MODERNA VACCINE

Valley doctor breaks down the difference between COVID-19 vaccines

In the U.S., the FDA has granted emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna.

PHOENIX - Vaccination efforts are getting underway in Arizona and other parts of the country, after two vaccines, one by [Pfizer and BioNTech](#) and the other by [Moderna](#), were granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

1. What's the difference between the COVID-19 vaccines?

While various countries have approved various COVID-19 vaccines, only the vaccines by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna have received emergency use authorization in the United States.

According to Dr. Ross Goldberg with the Arizona Medical Association, both the Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines are pretty much equal. Previously, FOX 10 reported that based on preliminary data from an ongoing study, Moderna's vaccine [appears to be 94.5% effective](#), while Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine [appears to be 90% effective](#), based on early and incomplete test results.

The difference between the two vaccines, however, comes in the storage and the number of days for the booster

shot.

"Pfizer needs to be stored in an ultra-cold storage, -100 degrees, and Moderna can be stored in a regular fridge you can find in an office," said Dr. Goldberg. (More details on how the Pfizer vaccines are stored are included below)

The timing of the vaccine is also different, according to Dr. Goldberg. Pfizer's vaccine has a 21-day difference between the two doses, and Moderna is 28 days.

"You have to get the second shot, because we have no information saying that you are protected after that first dose and first dose alone," said Dr. Goldberg. "Maybe in the future, there will be more research, but right now, the argument is you won't be protected as far as we know because we don't have the data to back that up."

2. Are there other vaccines for COVID-19?

While the vaccines developed by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna two out of a number of COVID-19 vaccines developed, they are the only two that are authorized for emergency use in the United States, [according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#).

[According to the World Health Organization](#), there are at least seven different vaccines across three platforms that have been rolled out in various countries, as of Feb. 18 In addition, there are more than 200 additional vaccine candidates in development.

Other vaccines developed for COVID-19, but not currently used in the U.S., include one by AstraZeneca, which is being modified in order to cope with a South Africa variant of COVID-19.

Related: [AstraZeneca tweaking COVID-19 vaccine to fight South African variant](#)

On Feb. 24, it was reported that a single-dose vaccine made by Johnson and Johnson offers strong protection against severe COVID-19, based on an analysis released by U.S. regulators, setting the stage for a final decision on the vaccine.

Related: [FDA releases new data on Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine ahead of decision](#)

3. When did the vaccines first arrive in Arizona?





Vaccine doses ready for distribution in Maricopa County

The first doses of the recently-approved COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Arizona on Dec. 14.

The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines arrived on Dec. 14, in line with what officials with the Governor's Office announced on Dec. 9, when they say vaccines will start to arrive on the week of Dec. 13.

Arizona had expected to receive 383,750 COVID-19 vaccine doses by the end of December 2020, and in the first week, vaccine doses was distributed to Maricopa and Pima counties.

"Maricopa will receive approximately 47,000 doses and Pima will receive approximately 11,000 doses, totaling approximately 58,000 doses," read a portion of a statement released by officials with the Governor's Office.

"Moving forward, we expect weekly allocations in order to continue vaccinating more and more people each week," said Dr. Cara Christ with the Arizona Department of Health Services on Dec. 11.

However, on Dec. 18, FOX 10 reported that Arizona is expected to receive 28,000 fewer COVID-19 vaccines for the week of Dec. 20.

In Maricopa County, the first vaccine doses arrived at a secure warehouse location. Then, along with the help of sheriff's deputies, the vaccines were taken to POD locations (more on that below), where they are being stored at the very low temperature of -78°C.

Six ultra-low temperature freezers were purchased by HonorHeath to house the Pfizer vaccine at the temperature required. Shots that arrived in Maricopa have already been assigned to thousands of health care workers in the Valley, with some in the 1A priority group set to receive the vaccine at a drive-thru site on the morning of Dec. 17.

According to Dr. Jim Whitfill the, Senior Vice President of HonorHealth, the site can do 1,000 vaccinations a day, but will ramp up slowly.



Doug Ducey ✓
@dougducey



The [#COVID19](#) vaccine has arrived in Arizona — and this is something we can all be thankful for. We are facing the greatest public health challenge of our lifetime, and Americans stepped up to get the vaccine to our communities quickly and efficiently. 1/

2:09 PM · Dec 14, 2020





Linda Fox 10
@lindawfox10



IT'S HERE!

Nearly 10 thousand doses of [#Pfizer](#) vaccine arrive at Honor Health facility in North Phx.

Vaccinations of priority healthcare workers begin Thursday morning.

[#fox10phoenix](#) [#COVID19](#) [#vaccine](#)



2:02 PM · Dec 14, 2020



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See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter



Public Health
@Maricopahealth



Vaccine has arrived!

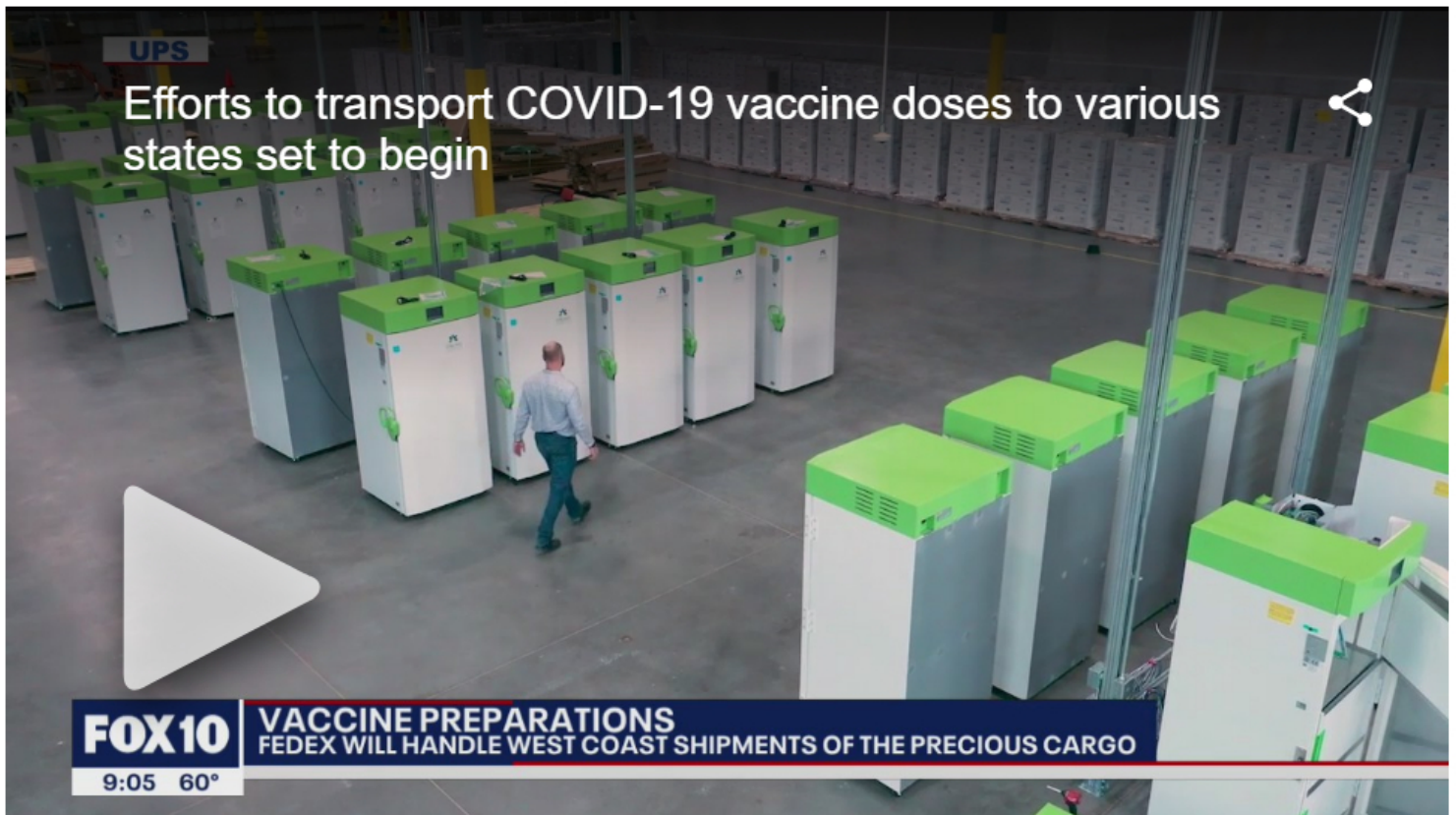
We are excited to receive the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines. The countdown to dispensing is on...



11:45 AM · Dec 14, 2020



4. How will the vaccines get transported to Arizona?



Efforts to transport COVID-19 vaccine doses to various states set to begin

The vaccines need to be kept at a very low temperature due to its properties.

With some COVID-19 vaccine, there is the challenge of keeping it at an ultralow temperature so that it remains effective. Experts explain that in comparison to traditional vaccines, the vaccine Pfizer and Moderna covid vaccines are built on Messenger RNA, which is why they need to be kept frozen.

On Dec. 12, FOX 10 has learned that two major delivery companies, FedEx and UPS, are handling COVID-19 shipments, with FedEx leading operations on the West Coast while UPS handles operations on the East Coast.

Over the course of three days, the plan is to distribute the vaccines to more than 600 distribution sites across the country, with the goal of getting the most vulnerable vaccinated as soon as possible.

Starting on Dec. 14, the vaccines will be rolling out of a manufacturing plant in Kalamazoo, Mich., and shipped to distribution sites across the United States. In most cases, the sites are large hospitals or other storage facilities.

150 of those sites are expected to get shipments on Dec. 14, another 425 on Dec. 15, and 66 should receive the vaccine on Dec. 16.

Officials with UPS have released a statement, on the measures taken to keep the vaccine cold. They say as part of the so-called "Operation Warp Speed," they will be producing over 24,000 pounds of ice every day, in addition to

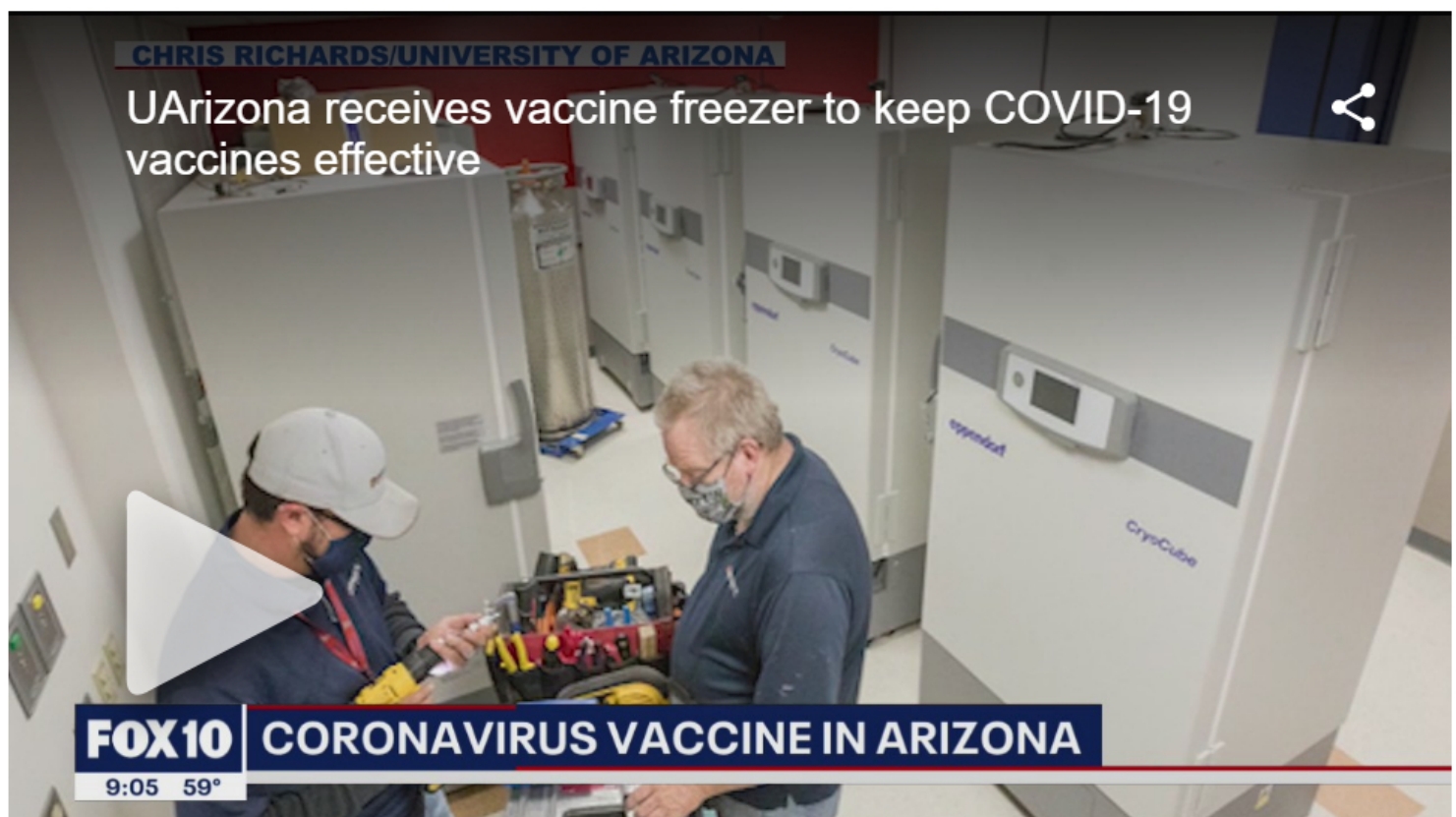
purchasing a freezer farm. They also have a newly designated 24/7 command center to track shipments, and to keep tabs on the temperature of these vaccines.

"Extensive coordination will ensure that this occurs," said Gen. Gustavo Perna, the Chief Operating Officer for Operation Warp Speed. "We worked with Pfizer, McKesson, UPS, FedEx, federal and local law enforcement agencies to ensure safety and security of the vaccine."

FedEx will also be getting ice to keep the vaccines cold, and transporting the vaccines using priority overnight service. In a statement, officials with the company said they will utilize "Temperature control solutions, near real-time monitoring capabilities, and a dedicated healthcare team to support the express transportation of vaccines and bioscience shipments."

In addition, FedEx's CEO added that this is "among the most important work in the history of our company, and we're honored to be a part of the effort to help end this pandemic."

5. How will be vaccines be stored?



UArizona receives vaccine freezer to keep COVID-19 vaccines effective

Some of the COVID-19 vaccines developed need to be stored at an ultra-low temperature in order for it to keep its efficacy.

In Arizona, the University of Arizona is among those helping to store the vaccines in an appropriate manner.

On Dec. 11, FOX 10 reported on UArizona's vaccine freezers. Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management at University of Arizona Christopher Kopach says the university has received a shipment of seven -80°C (-112°F) freezers to store vaccines. The university is also expecting a couple more -20°C (-4°F) freezers.

"They're upright freezers roughly, let's say, about eight feet high, four feet wide, and we can put in roughly 140,000 vials of the vaccine in there," said Kopach.

All the freezers in total are capable of storing 1.6 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. There is also a plan in place in case of a power cut.

"If we ever had electrical bump where we lost power, we have proper redundancy in here that it would not affect the -80," said Kopach.

6. How will the vaccines be distributed?

Vaccines will be given at drive-thru spots, also known as PODs. There are a number of vaccination sites across the State of Arizona.

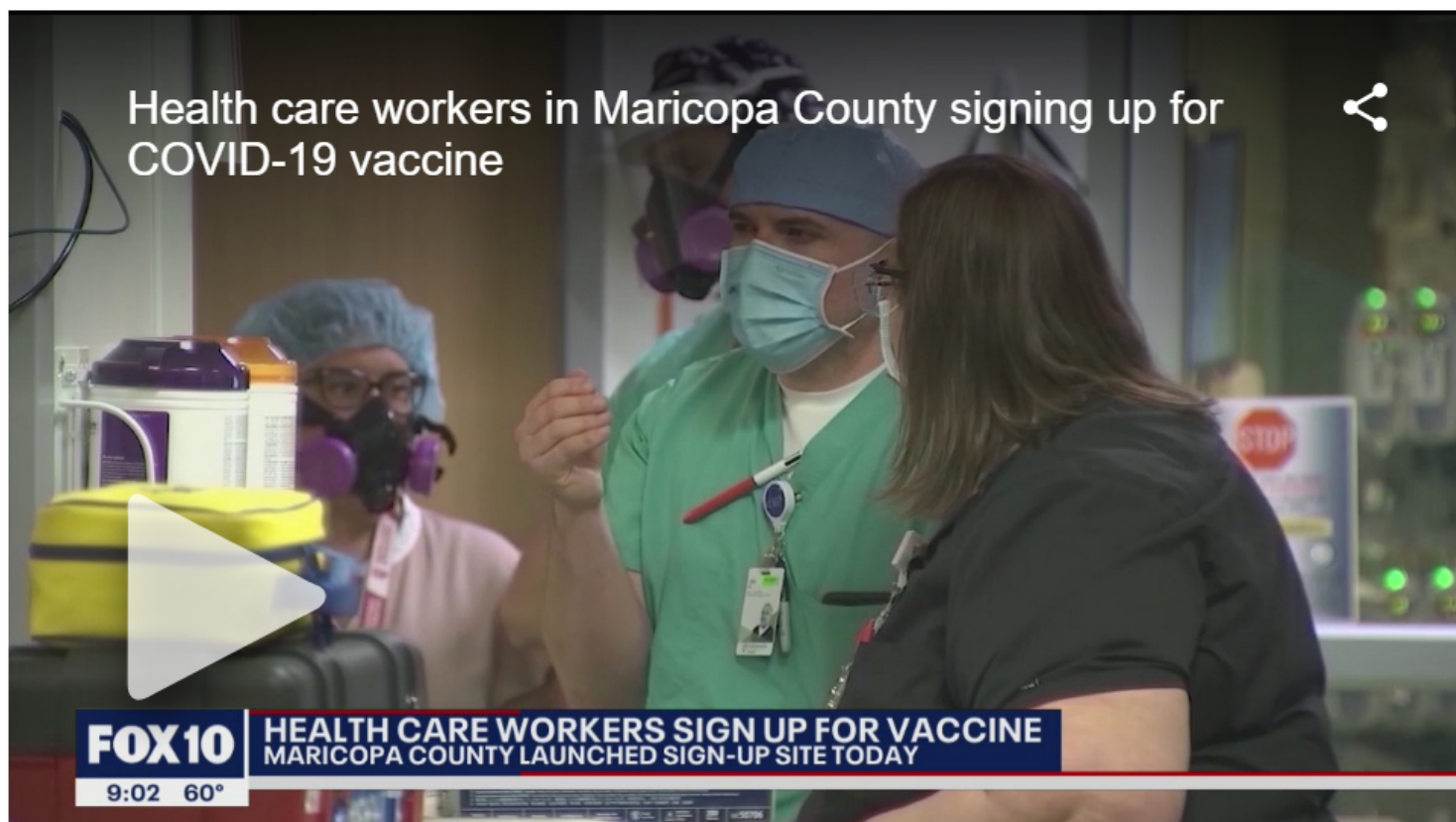
Related: [COVID-19 Vaccine finder](#)

7. How many people have been vaccinated?

As of Feb. 24, 2021, figures provided by officials with the Arizona Department of Health show that 1,114,425 people have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 438,534 people are fully vaccinated against the virus.

The number of people who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine represents 15.5% of Arizona's population of 7,189,020.

8. Who will get the vaccine first?



Health care workers in Maricopa County signing up for COVID-19 vaccine

The site for COVID-19 vaccine signups was launched by county officials on Dec. 12.

Arizona has [a phased approach](#) to COVID-19 vaccination.

According to the state's vaccination phases, healthcare workers, people in health support occupations, emergency medical workers, and long-term care facility staff and residents are eligible to be vaccinated in Phase 1A.

In Phase 1B, education and childcare workers, people in protective services occupations, adults 65 and older (depending on jurisdiction), Essential services/critical industry workers, and adults with high-risk conditions in congregate settings are in Phase 1B.

People eligible to get vaccinated in Phase 1C include adults of any age with high-risk medical conditions, and adults living in congregate settings.

Those in the general population are eligible to get vaccinated in Phases 2 and 3.

"I can't wait for the people to start getting the vaccine, because that's really where we want to get to that level distributing enough within the general public so we can start loosening up these regulations," said Dr. Goldberg. "I wore a mask today. I'm still physically distancing. We can't let up on that until a larger segment of the population has received these vaccines."

[As of Feb. 23, 2021](#), all counties within Arizona, except Santa Cruz County, are vaccinating those 65 or older. In terms of vaccination phases, only Apache and Gila Counties are in Phase 1C.

9. How much will the vaccine cost?

In Arizona, Gov. Doug Ducey announced on Dec. 2 that he has signed an executive order, that will allow all Arizonans to [receive the vaccine for free](#).

Gov. Ducey added that taxpayer dollars will not be used to pay for the vaccines.

10. So, with the vaccine getting out to people, does this mean I don't have to wear a mask anymore?

Arizona doctor says arrival of COVID-19 vaccine doesn't mean people should stop wearing their masks





Arizona doctor says arrival of COVID-19 vaccine doesn't mean people should stop wearing their masks

The doctor says the vaccine's rollout will take its time. FOX 10's Jennifer Martinez reports.

No.

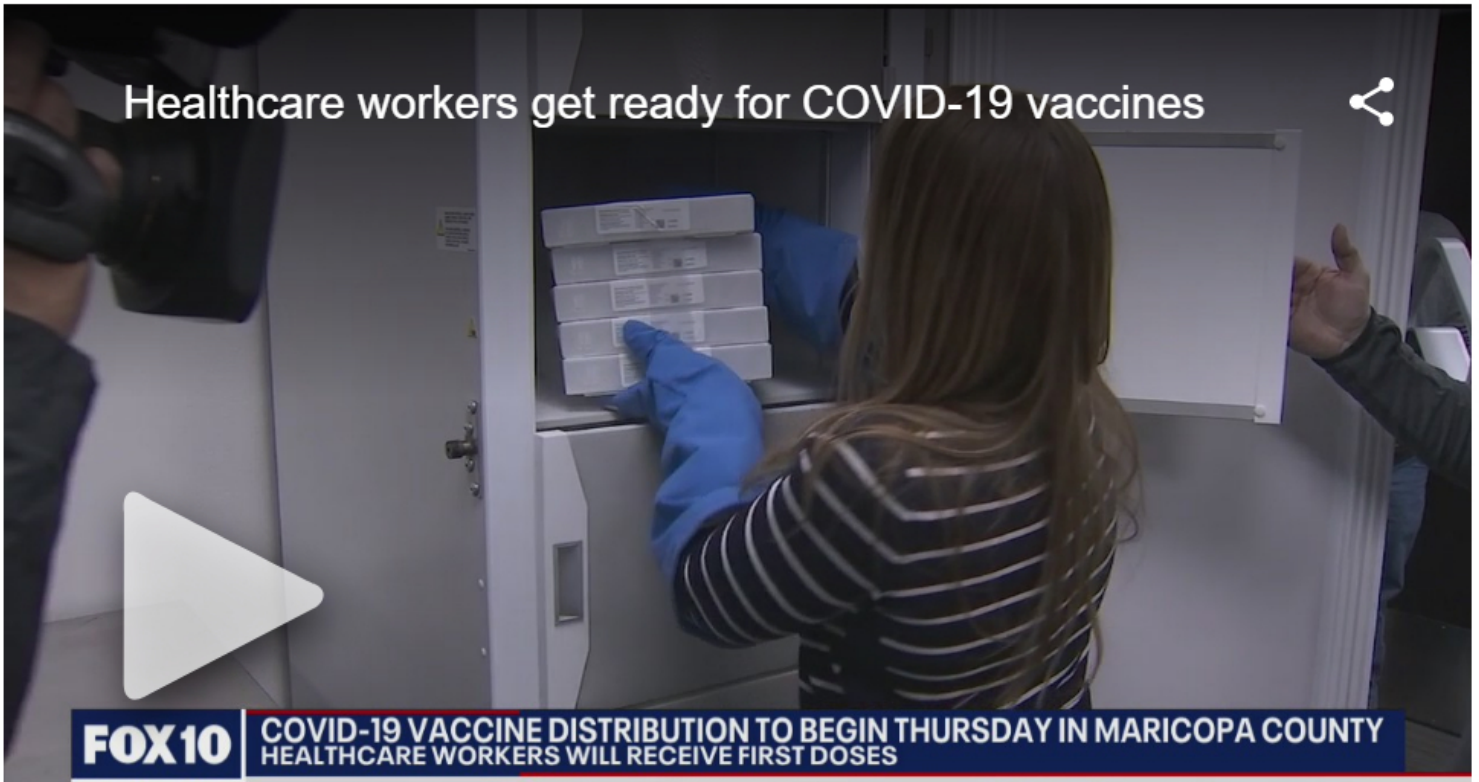
One doctor who spoke with FOX 10's Jennifer Martinez on Dec. 13, 2020 said while there is a vaccine on the way, people will need to continue to wear a mask.

"Now is not the time to throw caution to the wind because I worry that we are going to see a surge in January or February," said Dr. Natasha Bhuyan with One Medical. "It's important to remember that people are getting vaccinated right now, that is important, but there are many people who are getting sick with the virus right now."

Dr. Bhuyan also says while research trials show the vaccine can prevent symptomatic COVID-19 infections in the person itself, there are still unknowns.

"What we don't know is if the vaccine can prevent someone from spreading asymptomatic infection, and hopefully we get the results of that in the next few months, but until then, when we get to vaccinate, we have to continue to wear a mask," said Dr. Bhuyan.

11. What are medical professionals thinking about the vaccine?



Healthcare workers get ready for COVID-19 vaccines

One doctor has signed up to get the vaccine, but one nurse, who does not want to be identified, said he is still on the fence. FOX 10's Linda Williams reports.

In a survey of health care workers, only 55% of those who responded said they'd be very likely or likely to get the vaccine. That is not stopping emergency room doctor Amish Shah to sign up for the vaccine.

Dr. Shah has already signed up on the Maricopa County website to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine. He sees the ravages of the Coronavirus daily.

"When you have a situation which poses as much risk as it does, we have to take on a little additional risk when it comes to taking those vaccines," said Dr. Shah.

Meanwhile, one Valley nurse says she is torn on whether to get the shot.

"Since this is the very first one, that makes me a little 50-50," said the nurse. "We haven't used very much or known long-term side effects. Just weighing the pros and cons with the information we have available, and I'm just waiting."

The nurse says she feels no pressure from her employer to get the vaccine, and supports her many colleagues who have signed up to get it.

"I do want to know if there's any impact. I also want to hear from my colleagues," the nurse said.

12. What are other people thinking about the vaccine?

Families with loved ones in long term care facilities looking forward to vaccine



FOX 10

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COVID-19 VACCINES FOR LONG TERM CARE RESIDENTS
DISTRIBUTION EXPECTED TO BEGIN AT SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES DEC. 27TH

Families with loved ones in long term care facilities looking forward to vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine will be offered to medical workers, teachers, and those in long term care facilities first.

According to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey, [only half of all Americans surveyed are ready for the vaccine](#), but one person who spoke with FOX 10 on Dec. 11 says he is ready for the vaccine. Shawn Trobla's aunt is in an assisted living facility. Those in such facilities will be among the first to receive the vaccines, since it is known that most of the deaths related to COVID-19 have occurred in people over 75 years old.

"I am really grateful she will be prioritized based on her residential setting. It is so important," said Trobla.

Trobla hasn't been able to see her aunt for nine months, and the thought of being reunited brought tears to her eyes.

"It will be very celebratory," said Trobla. "I mean, it has been 9 months. We haven't been able to hug her, she hasn't been able to hug us."

"It gives us hope for normalcy coming up soon," said David Voepel, CEO for the Arizona Healthcare Association.

Voepel says all 147 of the skilled nursing facilities in Arizona signed up for the vaccine, which means 27,000 residents and staff who can be vaccinated. The distribution for those facilities will start on Dec. 27, and assisted living facilities will be the week after that.

"They can opt out. Anyone can opt out. It is not mandatory from any end," said Voepel. "We are encouraging everyone to get it because it seems like a safe shot."

CVS and Walgreens partners will vaccinate staff and residents in the facility, and they will conduct a total of three visits. Then, visits with family may be able to start again.

"We are hoping the vaccine gets up there, and it is wrapped up by first part of January, and hopefully by February, March, and spring, we can get back to normal and we can do social activities," said Voepel.

Trobla says after such a long year, this is bringing hope to her and her family that they can finally be together.

"When we can be together, it will be a nice celebratory party," said Trobla.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.