News Release
For Immediate Release: December 22, 2020

Kaua’i health care workers begin receiving COVID-19 vaccines

Health care workers on Kaua’i are now receiving COVID-19 vaccinations after the first shipment arrived on Kaua’i on Monday, Dec. 21. The first doses were administered to medical professionals at Wilcox Memorial Hospital beginning on Monday and at Kaua’i Veterans Memorial Hospital and clinics around the island starting Tuesday.

The vaccine will not be available to the general public until next year, but the state expects all adults who would like to be vaccinated to be able to do so in 2021. Taking the vaccine is entirely voluntary, and there is no requirement to participate.

“Vaccines are the key to protecting our kupuna, first responders, and health care workers, rebuilding our economy and being able to hug our loved ones and see our friends again,” said Dr. Janet Berreman, MD, Kaua’i District Health Officer. “Taking the vaccine is completely voluntary. If we do this together, we can save lives and bring back our Kaua’i way of life. Our hope is that 70 percent or more of Kaua’i residents choose to get vaccinated. The sooner we are vaccinated, and the more who are vaccinated, the better our chances of stopping the spread and gathering safely once again.”
In accordance with federal guidelines, vaccines will be distributed in phases starting with essential healthcare workers and long-term care facility residents and staff. This includes high-risk healthcare workers involved in direct patient care and workers who provide transportation, environmental services, and other healthcare facility services and are at risk of exposure. As additional vaccine shipments become available, they will be offered to essential workers, including first responders such as police and firefighters, corrections officers, transportation, the education sector, food and agriculture, and utilities.

Next, our kūpuna will have an opportunity to take the vaccines, along with those who have chronic health conditions that put them at increased risk of severe disease. Other groups will be offered the vaccines in the months to come as more become available. At this time, there is no COVID-19 vaccine approved for children.

Learn more about the State’s distribution plan: https://hawaiicovid19.com/vaccine/.

The initial shipments are of the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine. Thousands of doses of both vaccines arrived on Kaua‘i this week for health care professionals. Both vaccines require two doses of the same vaccine, separated by at least 3-4 weeks. Vaccines from other companies will be available to achieve FDA Emergency Use Authorization status and go into production and distribution.

Learn more about the different vaccines at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html.

**Vaccine safety**

Before a vaccine is available to the public, it must be rigorously tested in clinical trials to generate scientific data and other information. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been
granted Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and approved for use.

Clinical trials have found that, in general, most people do not have severe problems after being vaccinated. Your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Some people report getting a headache or fever after receiving a vaccine. These side effects are signs that your immune system is doing precisely what it is supposed to do. It is working to build protection against disease.

A small number of individuals have experienced more severe allergic-type reactions. For this reason, everyone receiving the vaccine will be asked to remain under observation for 15 minutes after being vaccinated. Every vaccination site has emergency supplies and trained medical staff on-site to manage any immediate severe vaccine reactions. Individuals with a history of severe allergic reactions will be counseled to seek vaccination with their primary care providers when the vaccine is more widely available.


**Beware of scammers**

The Federal Trade Commission, Department of Homeland Security, and other law enforcement partners have issued warnings regarding fraud around distributing a COVID-19 vaccine.

- If you are asked to pay anything, it’s a scam. The Hawaii Department of Health with [NOT](https://www.hawaii.gov/health) charge anyone or ask for any out of pocket payments, to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.

- There is no waitlist. No one can pay to put a name on a list to get the vaccine earlier or get early access to a vaccination clinic.
No one involved in vaccine distribution will ask for your Social Security, credit cards, or bank account numbers to get you the vaccine. If they do, it’s a scam.

[Click here to read more about possible scams and warning signs.]

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