

12.21.20

We are pleased that the CDC has prioritized assisted living residents and staff in phase 1a for the COVID vaccine. We're hoping to receive the vaccinations mid/late January. Vaccination against COVID-19 is the best way to protect those living in and receiving care here at Heritage. We've partnered with CVS Pharmacy to come to our facility and administer the vaccine to both residents and staff. We cannot mandate all staff and residents get the vaccine, however, we are strongly encouraging it. Vaccinating a significant majority of staff and residents is the only way we will be able to stop the spread of the virus.

Starting next week, we will be reaching out to our residents and families to get a verbal consent for CVS to administer the vaccination which will be given in 2 doses 3-4 weeks apart.

About the vaccine:

- This vaccine is safe and effective (95% effective). Both the PFIZER and MODERNA vaccine are mRNA vaccines.
- mRNA technology is new in vaccine production but is already being used in cancer treatment. It has been studied for more than ten years.
- Most vaccines contain an infectious pathogen or a part of it, but the way mRNA vaccines work, you are injected with a mixture of mRNA, and that mRNA gets taken up into your cells and produces the spike protein, which is the protein that covers the surface of the coronavirus.
- Your immune system recognizes that spike protein as foreign and raises antibodies against it. That way, when you come into contact with the real coronavirus, you are protected.
- The first shot is a "prime." It gets your immune system ready, so when you get the second shot, your body can really ramp up antibody production to ensure long-term protection against COVID-19.

Potential side effects:

1. As with any vaccine, your body may react to the vaccine as those antibodies are being made. Not everyone will experience this reaction. Below are the most common
2. You may experience: fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and pain at injection site after vaccination
3. These reactions can last for 24-48 hours and are typically more pronounced after the second dose
4. Side effects mean your body is doing its job and making antibodies (IT IS A GOOD THING) These are normal, common and expected

We are aware of essential caregiver's guidance, as well as expanded indoor visitation from the Minnesota Department of Health for Assisted Living facilities. We are required to have 14 consecutive days of no positive residents or staff in our buildings to expand to indoor visitation. We are continuing testing all residents and staff weekly until we get meet that goal. Please, continue to watch for updates on our website.