



COVID-19 Vaccine Shortage

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is Pennsylvania currently experiencing a vaccine shortage?

A. Yes, Pennsylvania currently does not have enough vaccine to provide second doses to everyone who currently needs them. The total second dose requests from vaccine providers this week far exceeds the total first and second dose supply received from the federal government. The Department of Health is currently re-allocating some first dose supply for second doses but will still not have enough vaccine for every second dose that is due in the next few weeks.

Q. What caused the vaccine shortage to occur?

A. Some providers were inadvertently using doses allocated for the second dose for first doses. There also appears to have been some system issues with reporting first and second doses.

Q. How long will this issue last?

A. The Pennsylvania Department of Health is hopeful that the vaccine shortage will be resolved in approximately 3 weeks.

Q. I am due for my second dose next week. What will happen if the Bethlehem Health Bureau doesn't have enough vaccine?

A. The Bethlehem Health Bureau is still working with the Pennsylvania Department of Health on vaccine supply for the next few weeks. Some first and second dose appointments may have to be postponed. The CDC has extended the recommended timeframe for the second dose and is now allowing up to 42 days from the first dose. Some individuals may receive the second dose a week or two after they were initially scheduled **but everyone will receive the second dose before the 42-day timeframe.**

Q. I have my first dose appointment scheduled. What will happen if the Bethlehem Health Bureau doesn't have enough vaccine?

A. The Bethlehem Health Bureau is still working with the Pennsylvania Department of Health on vaccine supply for the next week few weeks. Some first and second dose appointments may have to be postponed.

Q. How will I be notified if my appointment gets postponed?

A. Individuals will be notified via e-mail and phone if their appointment is postponed.

Q. If my appointment gets postponed, how will I be notified when an appointment becomes available?

A. Individuals will be notified about any new clinic dates via e-mail and phone.

Q. Why can't vaccine providers just give only second doses and cancel all first dose appointments over the next few weeks?

A. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has informed vaccine providers that they can't use first dose vaccine supply for second doses. If this is done, it will continue to contribute to the current issue.

Q. What happens if I cannot receive my second dose within 42 days from the first dose?

A. There is little data available on the effectiveness of the vaccine administered beyond the 42-day window. According to the CDC, if a vaccination goes beyond the scheduled intervals, there is no need to start the series of shots all over.

Q. Can I get my second dose from a different vaccine provider?

A. Most vaccine providers in Pennsylvania are impacted by this shortage so it is highly unlikely that another provider would be able to give second doses to individuals who didn't get their first dose from them.

Q. Can I get a Pfizer vaccine for the second dose if I received Moderna for my first dose?

A. The Pennsylvania Department of Health does not recommend the mixing of vaccines from different manufacturers.

Q. How will the Bethlehem Health Bureau determine who will get rescheduled?

A. Beginning next week, vaccine supply will be evaluated for each scheduled clinic. Each clinic is divided into a first dose and second dose clinic. If the health bureau doesn't have enough first doses for a particular clinic then the entire first dose clinic will be postponed. If the health bureau doesn't have enough second doses for a particular clinic then the entire second dose clinic will be postponed.