

How to get a COVID-19 vaccine in Seattle, King County and Washington state

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By

[Alex Iniguez](#)

Seattle Times assistant metro editor

Editor's note: *The information below was updated Jan. 25, but guidance and information can change rapidly, and many of the resources listed have recently experienced failures, backups or inaccuracies. If you notice a discrepancy or have any other information or tips, please email newstips@seattletimes.com.*

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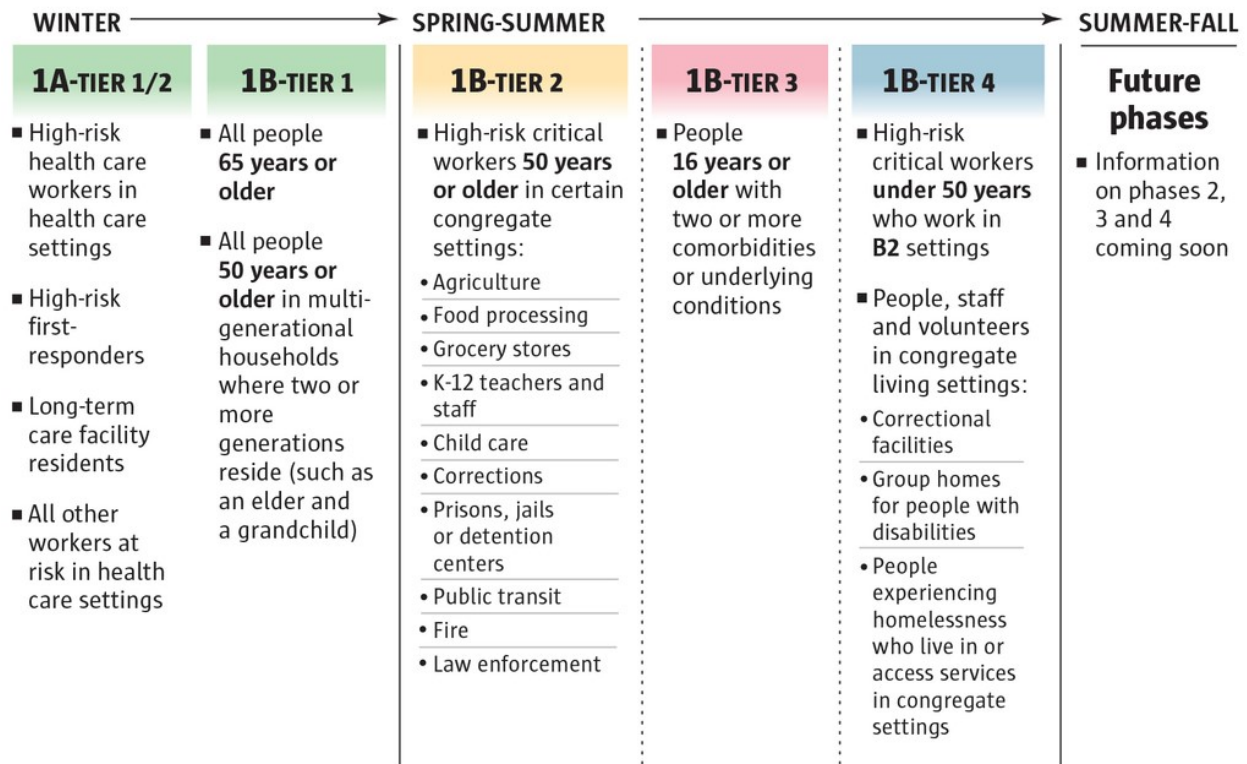
Last week, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced a public-private partnership [intended to speed up coronavirus vaccine distribution with a goal of administering 45,000 vaccines a day](#).

At the same time, Inslee acknowledges the state is implementing its new strategy before it has enough vaccine to keep up with that pace.

The state is in vaccination Tier 1 of Phase 1B, which allows people 65 and older — and those 50 and older in [multigenerational households](#) — to receive the vaccine. That's in addition to people in Phase 1A, including health care workers, high-risk first responders and long-term care residents.

Washington's coronavirus vaccine phases

Phase 1 (Tiers A and B) estimated timeline:



Source: CovidVaccineWA.org

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Previously, Tier 1 of Phase 1B was to include [people 70 and older](#), but it was expanded after the federal government called on states for the change. About 80% of Washington state's COVID-19 deaths are among those 65 and older, Inslee noted.

The changing federal guidance, combined with a predictable deluge of interest, has made it difficult for the Washington state Department of Health (DOH) to inform the public about the vaccine. In recent weeks, DOH has experienced issues with its PhaseFinder application that allows users to find out if they're eligible to be vaccinated, as well as its main website.

The result so far has been mass confusion and seemingly endless searches for information from people desperate to get their loved ones, or themselves, vaccinated.

We will continue to update this page with the most current guidance on how to receive a coronavirus vaccine in the Seattle area.

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to get a vaccine in Seattle, King County and Washington state:

Before you start

Before you begin your vaccination process, the top thing to know right now is that you'll need plenty of patience.

The vaccine rollout has encountered all sorts of snags and slowdowns, and even if with clear messaging, the supply of vaccines still wouldn't be enough to cover everyone.

Inslee said the state is shifting its strategy to create the infrastructure for mass vaccination without waiting for the volume of doses to match.

"We want people to recognize this is going to take time," the governor said.

So, yes, you'll need to pack your patience to get an appointment, and sometimes even just to get information from the state, a vaccination site or your doctor.

If you're ready to deal with some possibly frustrating scenarios, keep reading.

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Step 1: Are you eligible?

The first task is to find out if you're eligible for a vaccine.

If you have an internet connection, you can use the state's PhaseFinder tool at [findyourphases.wa.org](https://findyourphases.wa.gov) to find out. If you're not currently eligible, you can enter your information to be alerted when it's your turn to be vaccinated.

PhaseFinder has experienced failures recently due to the influx of interest, so it may not be accessible at all times.

If you don't have an internet connection, or if PhaseFinder is down, you can call DOH at 1-800-525-0127, press #. That number has seen long response times and a logjam of people trying to get information, so you may not be able to get through.

If you can't get through calling the main number above, DOH suggests calling its alternate phone number as it tries to add more call capacity: 888-856-5816.

If you cannot find whether you're eligible to be vaccinated, contact your primary care provider, who can advise your next steps.

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Step 2: Find a vaccination site

Once you’ve determined you’re eligible to be vaccinated, you can find a vaccination site on [DOH’s website](#). You can see the map here, too, via DOH:

It’s worth noting, however, that DOH said the site is a “work in progress” and may not be kept 100% up to date on which sites have vaccines available. But it’s a place to start.

If you know you’re eligible to receive the vaccine and aren’t having success finding a vaccination site through DOH’s website, or if you don’t have internet access, try calling DOH at 1-800-525-0127, press #, or at its alternate phone number of 888-856-5816. Another reminder: DOH has seen long response times and a logjam of people trying to get information, so you may not be able to get through.

You also can and should check your local health district’s website. In King County, that’s [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#).

If you still cannot find a vaccination site with open appointments, but you know you’re eligible to be vaccinated, contact your primary care provider for guidance.

Step 3: Make an appointment or get in line

Once you find a vaccination site that has confirmed it has available doses, you’ll need to make an appointment.

Some sites are first come, first served, so be sure to know whether you need an appointment at your

preferred vaccination site. If it's a first-come-first-served site, get there early and be prepared to wait.

If your vaccination site takes appointments, make one and hope that it doesn't get canceled. Some vaccination sites [have canceled appointments](#) because they said they don't have the supply of vaccines to fill all the appointments.

Step 4: Get vaccinated and continue to wear a mask

After you get your first shot, you'll need to wait either three or four weeks before getting a second shot, depending which vaccine you received.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine requires a booster three weeks after the first shot, and Moderna has a four-week gap between the two shots.

This means that the 95% protection generated by the two vaccines won't fully kick in until five or six weeks after the first shot.

Some vaccines, like for the flu, can prevent people from getting sick but not necessarily from being infected and able to transmit the virus to others. It isn't yet known if that is the case with coronavirus vaccines, said Dr. Tom Frieden, a former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [to Kaiser Health News](#).

"We don't yet know if the vaccine protects against infection, or only against illness," Frieden said. "In other words, a vaccinated person might still be able to spread the virus, even if they don't feel sick."

It is prudent for the vaccinated to still wear masks because clinical trials didn't answer the question

about a vaccinated person still being able to spread the disease, Michele Roberts, a DOH acting assistant secretary, [said last month](#).