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COVID Vaccine Q&A

By Leslie Phillips, NEST Board Member and Epidemiologist

Early attempts at vaccination read like a script:

Imagine, if you will, centuries of human populations devastated by a virus.

No social group is spared.

No country is untouched.

**Except milkmaids,
 standing in a field, surrounded by cows....**

In the late 18th century it was observed that one group of people were unlikely to get smallpox. Milkmaids, frequently infected with the relatively mild cowpox virus, were rarely sickened by smallpox. With this observation, the scientist Edward Jenner transferred matter from a milkmaid's cowpox lesion and injected it into a healthy young boy. Two months later he exposed the boy to smallpox. No disease occurred. This experiment was the very beginning of vaccines. In fact, the term "vaccine" originates from the term vaccinus, meaning "of or from the cow".

Fast forward to 2021 - no social group is spared and no country untouched by another pandemic: COVID-19. And finally there is a vaccine...

It's remarkable. And exciting. And came to fruition in less than nine months. And we really are building the plane as we fly it, with so much new and unknown. But all indications indicate that this plane will offer us a safe flight to our prime destination of herd immunity. Get your ticket soon. And please be patient, flight delays abound.



What will it cost me?

\$0.00. The federal government has paid for your dose and your insurance will pick up the administration fee. Uninsured? There's a fund for that so even without insurance you can expect to pay absolutely nothing.

When is my turn?

It depends where you live! Check your state's department of health site for details.

Our Sponsors



That was fast, what steps were skipped? I mean, how do I know this vaccine is safe?

Indeed, that was fast -- 9 months from sequencing to shots in arms. It's astounding really. Before now, the fastest vaccine to be developed was for Mumps in the 1960's and that took four years! Global urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic spurred global cooperation and the rapid development of vaccines. These vaccines have undergone a rigorous process to assess their safety and effectiveness before receiving approval. A key reason for the speed was that the vaccines were being manufactured while they were being tested just in case the clinical trials showed that the vaccines worked to safely protect against COVID-19. In the case of the current mRNA vaccines, this bet paid off with impressive clinical trial results meaning that early production efforts created a deployable vaccine in record time.

How do the vaccines work?

Vaccines train your immune system to recognize and fight a virus. COVID-19 attacks your cells with a spike protein that surrounds the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The mRNA vaccines use a molecule called mRNA to instruct your immune system to build a spike protein which your body identifies as an infection. In response, your immune system begins producing antibodies specific to SARS-CoV-2, and activates T-cells (cells that focus on foreign invaders) to fight the infection. All with one goal in mind: your now-primed immune system will work to fight off COVID-19 if you are exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the future.

One dose or two?

Two - separated by at least 3 weeks (Pfizer) or 4 weeks (Moderna). While we know that one dose offers some protection, we have sparse data on how much or how long. If we did, we'd be happy to vaccinate twice as many people twice as fast; yet it's a gamble that most scientists do not feel is wise in the absence of data to understand whether single-dose vaccination can get us to our goal of herd immunity. To be fair, some countries have opted to draw out the interval between dose 1 and 2 indefinitely to allow more universal first-dose access. This is an area where even scientists disagree. The CDC and WHO have both noted that where circumstances dictate, it is acceptable to wait up to six weeks after the first shot for the second dose. But it's already been decided for you, so there is no need to stick out your neck on this controversy, just stick out your arm... twice! That's the recommended FDA protocol.

Will it make me sick?

The vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. The mRNA vaccines contain a snippet of code that instructs the immune system to get to work preparing for possible exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but they carry no virus whatsoever. It is not unusual for people to get a sore arm for a day or two after vaccination and you may feel "icky" with fatigue or low-grade fever. This "under the weather" feeling rarely lasts more than a couple of days and is more common in young people and after the second dose. Think of it as your immune system gearing up for a battle it may someday encounter. Of course, people who never feel poorly after vaccination build immunity too!

I have heard I have to wear a mask even after fully vaccinated, why would that be?

You heard right! While we are cautiously optimistic it will, we do not yet know if the vaccine prevents virus transmission. The COVID-19 vaccine was tested for how well it prevents or mitigates infection, not transmission, so even after vaccination you will still need to take all the precautions that you have since the pandemic started. In addition to face coverings, these measures include social distancing--staying at least 6 feet away from others--and frequent handwashing, as these behaviors help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. So vaccinated or not, wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when indoors with anyone from outside your household, even when you are separated by more than six feet.

So what exactly is herd immunity?

It's the idea that when most of the population (aka "the herd") is immune to a disease, even those who are not immune (think someone whose health or age does not permit vaccination) are protected because the disease is unable to spread. Herd immunity is the percentage of the population that needs to be immune so that the virus fizzles out rather than marches on to find new victims. It varies by disease and the infectiousness of disease. For Polio, it is 80%. For Measles, 95%. For COVID-19, it is unknown but likely somewhere in the range of 70-90%.

Why are the vaccinations taking so long?

As hard as it is to make and test vaccines, the logistics of distribution are reminding us that the challenge is far from over. Unlike the flu vaccine, the mRNA vaccines are very persnickety about how they are stored. They are the Goldilocks of the vaccine world and if the temperature and timing are not "just right", they will be rendered ineffective.

In addition, demand is much greater than supply. In response, tiers of priority have been identified to prioritize distribution. Those most likely to have severe COVID-19 (such as older adults) or to be in situations that increase their risk of exposure to infection (such as health care providers) are in the first tiers to receive vaccination. Because demand is so great, even as our supply increases and more tiers open up, additional space and personnel will be needed to administer shots, and these are costs that are not easy for most states to absorb.

Additionally, priority tiers differ from state to state. And it quickly gets confusing -- for example two people of similar occupation, health, and demographics who live within a few miles of each other but separated by a state line may find themselves on very different vaccination timelines depending on their states' priority tiers and capacity for efficient distribution and administration.

Lastly, unlike much of the world, the United States has no "master list" of citizens, no national health care record, and no way to easily keep tabs on the full population.

Will the vaccine affect my COVID-19 test?

No, the COVID-19 test looks for genetic material (nucleic acid) or proteins from the virus. The vaccine will not leave genetic material or proteins in the nose, throat, or mouth where the testing swab is taken. Assume you have a COVID-19 infection, not a false positive from the vaccine, if you test positive for infection after vaccination. It is possible that the vaccine will cause you to test positive on an antibody test. That is a blood test that looks for the SARS-CoV-2 antibodies so a positive antibody (aka "serology") test, unlike a positive infection test, is not a reason to be concerned.

Can you guarantee it is safe?

I can guarantee that the mRNA vaccines are incalculably safer than the alternative of illness with COVID-19. I can also guarantee that I will be rolling up my sleeve as soon as I am eligible. And I can show you the data that over 1% of Americans who test positive for this virus are dying from it. This virus is not safe. While most people get sick and recover, many also suffer for months after illness and as of this writing over 400,000 Americans have died. For context, that is losing the equivalent number of Americans lost in the September 11th attacks every single week until October of 2023. In contrast, no deaths or life-threatening health events related to unexpected reactions to the vaccine have yet been reported from mRNA COVID-19 vaccination despite close tracking.

Can I mix and match?

It's not recommended. Mixing and matching is one of those actions that will inevitably occur but for which science currently lacks data. For now, I recommend you mix and match your Brown with a Burgundy and not your Moderna with a Pfizer.

What's up with the allergic reactions?

Anaphylaxis, a serious complication, has occurred approximately in 11.5 per 1 million vaccine doses. This usually occurs within ½ hour. It's not clear who is at risk but a history of severe allergies may be correlated with this reaction. If you are allergic to other vaccines, please consult with your doctor to determine what vaccination protocol is best for you. After you receive your injection, you will be monitored for any reactions. All vaccine sites are prepared to give you a medication called epinephrine and ensure you get medical attention should an allergic reaction occur.

Will the new variants make the vaccine ineffective?

This one reads like a script but to a horror movie:

As countries collectively celebrated their incredible global vaccine achievement, the virus pushed back. Silent at first, but soon strange reports began to surface from across the water: A Changed Virus!! Yes, the virus had begun to change. Would humanity have to start all over again?

Right now there is no indication that any variant, including the variant that has been so prevalent in the UK, can elude the vaccine. But this is something we are always watching and it's why maintaining all precautions and speeding up vaccination are so essential - we want to achieve herd immunity before the virus has a chance to mutate away from our vaccines. Luckily, even in this worst case scenario, the synthetic vaccines that we are using can be quickly revised to match more emergent strains.

How long will vaccination immunity last?

Currently this is not known. Many people think that COVID-19 vaccines will be like flu shots, in that we will need them annually. Right now, the hope is that protection lasts at least 12 months or longer. And there is a small chance you might still get coronavirus even if you have the vaccine, as the COVID-19 vaccines are around 95% efficacious. That is about as good as it gets for vaccines and means vaccinated people are 95% less likely to become infected with COVID-19 but it does not guarantee protection. But the vaccine may still work to mitigate the severity of infection -- based on the clinical trials, the person who gets COVID-19 despite vaccination is much less likely to experience severe COVID-19 than someone who was never vaccinated.

Has the vaccine been tested in people of color, older adults, children, or pregnant women?

The clinical trial researchers worked hard to recruit trial participants who represented the age, race, and ethnic diversity of the US. This includes older adults, and a wide range of racial and ethnic groups. However, children and pregnant women are special populations and were not included in the trials with the exception of 16 and 17 year olds in the Pfizer trial. Currently trials to include a larger pediatric population are ongoing. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has said that there are no known contraindications for pregnancy and that COVID-19 vaccines "should not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet criteria for vaccination based on ACIP-recommended priority groups." Pregnant women or women planning to become pregnant should talk to their doctor, specifically about how the known and theoretical risks of vaccination compare to the risks of COVID-19 infection during pregnancy.

Leslie will be updating [this blog post](#) with more answers about the COVID-19 vaccine. Contact leslie@wearedatadriven.com if you have any questions you would like her to answer.

Upcoming Events

See these events on
the calendar, page 8

****To join any Zoom meeting by phone, call 253-215-8782****

NEST Events Open to the Public

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

NEST High Tea - Tuesday, February 17 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Virtual Gathering, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 868 5517 8403 Password: 264718

NEST High Tea is returning! Our partner and one of our sponsors, Pam Stone of Family Resource Home Care will be taking over from Shawn D'Amilio, who was at With A little Help. Join us in this virtual gathering with a meet and greet with Pam. Introduce yourselves, give suggestions on what type of High Tea presentations you would like to participate in and get to know Pam and Family Resource Home Care.

***NEW* Trivia Time - Monday, February 22 from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

Virtual Gathering, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 506 878 3176 Password: 5256378

Calling all intrepid quiz masters, know-it-alls, and possessors of random knowledge! In partnership with Nathan Hale National Honor Society Club, we bring you TRIVIA TIME! Come test your knowledge for some good fun and oh yes, there will be prizes!!

Making Healthy Meals In Your Kitchen - January 21, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Virtual demo, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 859 4109 4039 Password: 938238

If you are craving a little more guidance about healthy eating and want to learn to cook meals that don't take much effort, this class is for you! Once a month via Zoom, Debi Quirk, RN and NEST member and volunteer will guide you through a recipe and demonstrate how to put the meal together. You may watch, or you may cook along with her, and enjoy something delicious at the end of the class. An ingredient list, the recipe, and the nutritional facts will be sent out monthly to those that register in advance. The recipes can be adjusted for those who prefer vegetarian or vegan meals.

Mind, Body, Spirit, Healing Community: Qigong - Thursdays from noon to 1:00 pm

Virtual class, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 936 5963 6795 Password: 015290

Quiet the mind, experience a grounded and centered state using focused intent, breath, and body postures. Deeply relax and practice self-healing meditations in still (internal) and moving (external) forms. Virtual Class materials: floor space, armless chair/stool, comfy place to sit, stand, + lie down for relaxation forms. If your internet signal stretches and you have safe access to the outdoors with social distance, consider practicing with us in nature!

Moving with Greater Ease: Feldenkrais

Tuesdays (chair) and Wednesdays (floor) from 11:00 am to noon

Virtual class, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 785 8420 3476

These classes, led by Gail Thompson and Deonne Poston, use the Feldenkrais Method (both teachers) and Bones for Life (Deonne) of gentle movements to help students function with increased comfort, flexibility, and balance. Safe, relaxing, and varied movement lessons stimulate the brain's neuroplasticity to increase awareness and explore options for how we use our bodies in sitting, reaching, walking, and other activities. Movements may help improve balance, reduce pain, and decrease peripheral neuropathy. No experience needed; lessons can be done in chairs (Tuesday) or floor (Tuesdays and Wednesdays). Students should wear warm, comfortable clothing and use a flat-bottomed chair or a mat/blanket on the floor. Gail and Deonne send students weekly emails with Zoom links.

Pickleball at NEST - Fridays from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Wedgwood Presbyterian pickle ball court, 8008 35th Ave NE (parking lot). Weather dependent.

Seattle Parks and Recreation has a mobile recreation program called Rec'N the Streets. This is an opportunity for the city to bring to you a FREE, safe, socially distanced recreation opportunity, activity and programs.

We are all experiencing stressful times. One way to alleviate the stress is to engage in safe social interactions and to "Get Movin". Physical activity not only assists the body with staying healthy but also provides mental stimulation and an emotional outlet. In partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation, we bring you Pickle Ball! Come join us for some FUN movement and enjoy the afternoon together playing fun, easy, low impact games of pickleball. Participant numbers will be limited for safety. So rounds of games will be played so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Member-Only Groups and Activities

On Our Own Again - Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 1:00 pm

Virtual Meeting, [click here](#) to join on Zoom. Meeting ID: 871 3996 8668 Passcode: 845032

On Our Own Again is open to those who wish to discuss any important losses in their lives, not only the loss of a spouse, with the focus on coping with daily life while living alone. Share conversation and companionship with people who are navigating the same challenges as you. This group meets on the first Wednesday of each month online via Zoom.

Low Vision Support Group - Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Virtual meeting, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 832 7713 6000 Passcode: 390606

Join us on the second Thursday of the month to discuss challenges and changes that accompany any vision loss and share resources and coping strategies. Facilitated by NEST Member Janet Wright.

NEST Zoom Gathering - Tuesday, February 16 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Virtual event, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 874 2557 5881 Password: 723182

In lieu of NEST potlucks for now, we bring you a virtual NEST gathering on the third Tuesday of the month, where we can still be social and connected with each other while social distancing! Let's have a fun and friendly conversation about hobbies or interests, sports, food, movies --- you name it, let's talk about it. Moderated by NEST members Marilyn Layton and Nancy Nordquist.

Poetry Reading Group - Wednesday, February 24 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Virtual group, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 870 7336 3862 Password: 030009

Join your NEST friends for reading, sharing, and appreciating great poems and poets. Please bring one or two of your favorite poems (can include poems you have written) to read aloud with the group. This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the NEST office and is facilitated by NEST Members Rosemary Blakemore and Debbie Anderson.

Science Club - Thursday, February 25 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Virtual group, [click here](#) to join. Meeting ID: 857 2117 5104 Password: 009510

Calling all scientists and science enthusiasts! Join us on the fourth Thursday of each month for an afternoon of intellectual engagement. Bring an article that you found fascinating on anything - black holes or black bears, geology or genetics - and we will discuss it as a group. All scientific interests are welcomed here!

Women's Caregiver Support Group - Fridays from 10:30 am to noon

Contact the NEST Office to get more information about attending this class via phone or computer.

Volunteer Julia Devin leads this group at the NEST office. Come enjoy a great space to connect with other members who are supporting a loved one who needs care.

Recommended Community Events Open to the Public

Selling Your Home: An Online Presentation for Seniors - Wednesday, February 24 at 2:30 pm Virtual Event, for more information and to RSVP, call 206.523.7315

In this online event, real estate expert Dick Carruthers joins us to share on the following topics: tips for preparing your home for top dollar in today's market; whether you should stage your home; how to effectively market your home for the max value; and an update on today's market. Hosted by Ida Culver House Ravenna.

Type II Diabetes Prevention - Wednesday, February 3 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm Virtual workshop, [click here](#) to register.

Go beyond the dietary guidelines and learn how to navigate real life situations that will help lead you toward important lifestyle changes. With a Certified Health Coach as your guide, learn how to implement lasting, healthy change in your life. Sample topics include: how to shop fast and on budget, strategies to sleep more.

The job skills, life skills, & digital creativity classes are made possible by support from The Seattle Public Library Foundation, and in partnership with South Seattle College. This workshop - and all Seattle Public Library classes - is free and everyone is welcome. Registration is required. Each class has a 50 person capacity, so please register as soon as possible. Hosted by Seattle Public Libraries.

Virtual Write with Hugo House: Seattle Writes - Tuesday, February 16 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm Virtual event, [click here](#) or call 206.302.7030 to register and learn more.

Attend free drop-in writing circles facilitated by established local writers from Hugo House! Bring something you're working on, or just come ready to write. Hosted by Seattle Public Libraries.

Thanks, Jessica!

During these difficult times, NEST continues to identify areas for efficiency to ensure that we are maximizing our dollars and ensuring the longevity of the organization. The Board has made the decision to restructure, with some of our administrative and communications work outsourced, and additional responsibilities taken on by our Director of Operations and Director of Development. This restructure resulted in eliminating the position of Communications and Development Manager. We appreciate all that Jessica has done for NEST in the past year and will miss her very much. Although she is sad to be leaving the NEST community, Jessica is looking forward to starting a new career in education. In the meantime, she will be spending more time doing krav maga with Copernicus (pic. right), Tunisian crocheting, being a full-time pillow to her other cats Shadow and Hazel, and going on as many scuba diving adventures as possible.

Jessica will miss all of the wonderful people she met working at NEST and hopes that she can stay in touch with you all.



February 2021 Calendar

Find the details for these events on pages 5 - 7

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 11:00 am Feldenkrais*	3 11:00 am Feldenkrais* 1:00 pm On Our Own Again	4 12:00 pm Qigong*	5 10:30 am Women's Group 1:00 pm PickleBall*	6
7	8	9 11:00 am Feldenkrais*	10 11:00 am Feldenkrais*	11 12:00 pm Qigong* 2:00 pm Low Vision Group	12 10:30 am Women's Group 1:00 pm PickleBall*	13
14	15	16 11:00 am Feldenkrais* 4:00 pm NEST Zoom Gathering	17 11:00 am Feldenkrais* 2:00 pm High Tea*	18 12:00 pm Qigong* 2:00 pm Making Healthy Meals w/ Debi*	19 10:30 am Women's Group 1:00 pm PickleBall*	20
21	22 2:00 pm Trivia Time *	23 11:00 am Feldenkrais*	24 11:00 am Feldenkrais* 2:00 pm Poetry Group	25 12:00 pm Qigong* 2:00 pm Science Club	26 10:30 am Women's Group 1:00 pm PickleBall*	27
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Mary Anderson

This article is provided by our sponsor **Mary Anderson, a Managing Broker with Windermere Real Estate**

The King County Assessor's office will begin mailing 2021 Tax Assessment Notices to homeowners starting February 14th. Taxes for the first half of 2021 - January 1st through June 30th, will be due no later than April 30th. Second half taxes for July 1st through December 31st will be due no later than October 31st.

I recently went to [King County's website](#) and entered my property address; hit search and was able to access the tax history for the appraised value of my home. The house and land are appraised separately, and it is their combined value which is the taxable total.



The County assigns an assessed value to a property based on several factors including sales and appreciation in the local real estate market, property improvements, its condition, and geographic area. The tax table notes 2020 is the Value Year used to determine 2021 taxes.

As I reviewed the assessed value for my own home, I noticed that values from previous years reflected the dips and rises of real estate sales trends in Seattle. For E.G., in tax year 2007 the County used 2006 data to determine value. Real Estate values in 2006 showed modest gains from the previous year. My 2007 value was \$1,000 more than the previous year. However, in tax year 2008 when the County used sales data from 2007 the assessed value of my home increased 12%. As you may recall, Seattle's 2007 Real Estate market saw record increases in home selling prices.

Whereas in tax year 2010 when 2009 sales data was used, I saw the appraised value of my home drop by 15%. The Great Recession was a year old in 2009. People were losing their jobs; foreclosures were becoming common and real estate values were quickly declining.

I mention this as real estate values in Seattle have had record increases in the past few years. And the assessed value of your home for 2021 will most likely reflect those increases. The median sales price for a Seattle home in 2020 was \$766,000. This compares to the 2020 median sales price for homes in zip codes 98105 and 98115 which was \$948,000.

Before you receive the assessment notice for your home you may want to apply for a Senior Exemption. The county has recently increased income limits for these exemptions which has enabled more Seniors to qualify. [Here is a link](#) to King County's website and a short video that walks you through the steps of applying.

You can also appeal the county's valuation by filing a formal appeal. [Here is a link](#) to another county webpage which outlines the appeal process.



Mary P. Anderson
206-915-1076
Windermere Real Estate/PN

Mary Anderson is a local real estate agent serving Seattle and specializing in helping seniors and their families who are making a late life move. Learn more at www.marypanderson.com.

Celebrations

Honoring events, anniversaries, and major life changes in the NEST community.

NEST welcomes new members Carol L., Julia V., and Julie & Tom W.!

February Member Birthdays: A very happy birthday to NEST Members Sharon G., Ron H., and Livia J.!

Last Chirps

Do you have an idea for a new NEST group or a way to stay connected to your loved ones from afar? Let us know! Contact our office at **206.525.6378** or info@nestseattle.org.

We want to hear from you!

Are you interested in submitting a poem, story, article, or piece of art to the newsletter? Contact our Director of Operations, Chris Alin - chris@nestseattle.org.

Volunteer with NEST

Grocery Shopping

Help keep our members safe amid the COVID-19 outbreak by delivering groceries to their home.



Friendly Visitor Calls

Help make sure that NEST members are safe and well through weekly check-in calls.



Clear Walkways

Help members stay safe by clearing ice and snow from their driveway or sidewalk.



Exercise

Enjoy the crisp winter air and help our members stay active by accompanying them on a walk in their neighborhood.



Connect with NEST!

Call or email (206) 525-6378 or info@nestseattle.org

On the web at nestseattle.org

Hours Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am-4pm

