

SBL Medical Affairs VP Hildebrant answers COVID-19 vaccine FAQs

As the community and the country at large tries to achieve herd immunity with the COVID-19 vaccine, there are countless residents who are resistant to the vaccine due to its novelty and question its efficacy.

SBL VP Medical Affairs Jim Hildebrandt, DO, explained that scientists unanimously agree receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is much safer for people than contracting the disease itself. COVID-19 has dealt a devastating blow to people's health, regardless of age, race, gender, or background. The virus is random – testing, social distancing, and masks can help reduce infections, but vaccines drastically prevent hospitalizations that overwhelm hospitals.

Sarah Bush Lincoln has hosted numerous COVID-19 vaccine clinics to the community since January. Dr. Hildebrandt said “We have heard concerns of the unvaccinated and want to address those who are still ‘on the fence’ about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Which vaccine should I get?

Ultimately, people should get the first vaccine available to them. All of the vaccines strongly protect

people from hospitalizations and infections.

What happens if I only get the first dose of Moderna or Pfizer?

Your body will have a lower chance of creating protective antibodies against COVID-19 if you only get the first dose. Protection against infection also may not last as long as it would with both doses.

I had COVID-19. Does this mean I am protected from catching it again? Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine even if I had the virus?

If you contracted COVID-19 and recovered from it, you likely have some protection against the virus. However, your natural immunity is not as high as it would be with the vaccine.

What does herd immunity mean?

Herd immunity refers to the degree at which a population has protection against an infection. Once a population reaches a certain percentage of immunity, the virus will die out over time. The virus won't be able to spread, mutate, and ultimately, harm people, at that point. Pinpointing an exact percentage required to reach herd immunity is challenging because many factors impact



Submitted Photo

VP Medical Affairs Jim Hildebrandt, DO

this percentage. However, scientists estimate that 70 to 90 percent of the population will need to be vaccinated to

reach herd immunity against COVID-19.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines protecting people

against new strains of the disease?

Data shows that the COVID-19 vaccines protect people well against these new strains appearing around the world. The protection levels may not be in the same range compared to the original virus, but people are safer from the new virus strains when they have received a vaccine. One of the reasons to get vaccinated is to protect against mutations of the disease that could be more aggressive and infectious. Every time COVID-19 is passed from one person to another, there's an opportunity for it to morph into something more dangerous.

Is the vaccine safe for women who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or a child-bearing age?

Women who are pregnant show higher risk for being hospitalized or on a ventilator, should they contract the virus. Scientists continue to collect more data, but a study in Obstetrics & Gynecology showed that researchers found no evidence that either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines damage the placenta during pregnancy. There is no evidence that women in child-bearing years should not be vaccinated. Each

woman should talk to her provider and weigh the pros and cons. Again, the same for breastfeeding women.

Do I still have to wear a mask after getting the COVID-19 vaccine?

As of May 13, the CDC says fully vaccinated people don't need to wear face masks indoors or outdoors in most settings. Fully vaccinated means two weeks after you have received all of your vaccine doses. Masks will still be required in healthcare settings, at businesses that mandate them, or on public transportation.

Can I still be a carrier if I have had the COVID-19 vaccine?

Theoretically, yes. It's possible that a person could have the virus reproducing in his or her body without ever knowing it and could asymptotically transit the disease. Data suggests that this is not the case for COVID-19, but scientists do not have a conclusive answer yet.

How can I know for sure if I should get the vaccine?

If you still have questions about whether the COVID-19 vaccine is right for you, ask your primary care provider. The vaccine is free to all Americans.

LyondellBasell Tuscola plant recognized with prestigious safety award

LyondellBasell Tuscola Plant today announced the company was awarded the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers' (AFPM) 2020 Elite Gold Safety Award for industry-leading safety performance.

Workplace safety is one of the Tuscola Plant's highest priorities, driven by an unwavering commitment from its employees. Petrochemical plants honored with the Elite Gold Safety Award have demonstrated superior and consistent safety performance, program innovation and leadership.

“Receiving this distinction is possible because of the dedication and commitment of the men and women who work here at our Tuscola Plant,” said Aaron McKee, Site Manager. “We are proud and honored to be recognized, because it showcases that safety is at the forefront of everything we do.”

The AFPM Safety Awards Program is part of a comprehensive safety program developed to promote accident prevention in the petroleum refining and petrochemical manufacturing industries. Winners were announced on April 26.

The LyondellBasell Tuscola Plant is one of five sites to be recognized with the AFPM Elite Gold Award. The other LyondellBasell



facilities making the list include:

- * Chocolate Bayou Polymers Plant, TX;
- * Corpus Christi Operations, TX;
- * Matagorda Complex, TX;
- * Victoria Plant, TX

One LyondellBasell facility was honored with AFPM's newest distinction,

the Innovation Award. LyondellBasell's Clinton Complex received this award for their continued engagement around process safety, including additional training around life-critical procedures. The AFPM Innovation Award recognizes petrochemical facilities, and their contractors which have unique and innovative programs or practices

that effectively improve the site's safety performance for either occupational or process safety.

About LyondellBasell's Tuscola Plant

The Tuscola plant employs around 100 people and occupies nearly 900 acres. The site produces ethyl alcohol, diethyl ether and specialty polymers. Ethyl alcohol,

or ethanol, is used in many health care and personal product applications such as hair spray, capsule manufacturing, hand sanitizer, and pharmaceutical cleaning. Diethyl ether finds applications as a laboratory reagent solution, usage in chemical synthesis, as an ammunition drier, and starter fluid. The specialty polymers produced

here include microfine powders used as additives in personal care products, lubricants, binding agents, water filtration systems, and moisture barriers.

About LyondellBasell

LyondellBasell (NYSE: LYB) is one of the largest plastics, chemicals and refining companies in the world. Driven by its employees around the globe, LyondellBasell produces materials and products that are key to advancing solutions to modern challenges like enhancing food safety through lightweight and flexible packaging, protecting the purity of water supplies through stronger and more versatile pipes, improving the safety, comfort and fuel efficiency of many of the cars and trucks on the road, and ensuring the safe and effective functionality in electronics and appliances. LyondellBasell sells products into more than 100 countries and is the world's largest producer of polypropylene compounds and the largest licensor of polyolefin technologies. In 2021, LyondellBasell was named to Fortune Magazine's list of the “World's Most Admired Companies” for the fourth consecutive year. More information about LyondellBasell can be found at www.lyondellbasell.com.

Douglas County Health Department's COVID-19 weekly update

Douglas County now has 27.49 percent of its citizens fully vaccinated. As of May 16 there have been a total of 2,668 COVID cases in the county, 43 total deaths, and currently there are 42 active and close contacts being monitored by DCHD. Since last Monday's update, seven Douglas County residents have tested positive for COVID-19.

IDPH reported on May 14 that Region 6 had a seven-day rolling average positivity rate of 2.6 percent, while Douglas County's positivity rate was 1.9 percent. Region 6 has seen 11 consecutive days of the positivity rate remaining under 8 percent, and 11 consecutive days of ICU bed availability at 20 percent

or greater. However, there have been six consecutive days of COVID-19 hospital patient admission increases.

At Saturday's clinic in Tuscola, we administered 156 Pfizer second doses, 33 Moderna first doses, and 155 Moderna second doses. Vaccination efforts will now look a little different in Douglas County. There will be no public clinics from this week forward; instead, starting next week DCHD will have drive-thru, appointment-based vaccinations at the J600 location at Tuscola Outlet Mall. Online registration links will continue to be posted on our website (dchealthdept.org). This is also where you can find links to CDC vaccination

guidelines, Douglas County vaccine statistics, Bridge to Phase 5 guidelines, vaccine finder tool, and other useful information.

Just a note about the Pfizer vaccine ... formal approval was given last week by the FDA and CDC to expand age guidelines to include anyone age 12 and up. This is exciting news, and DCHD encourages parents/guardians to consider having their children vaccinated. Because of storage requirements and lot sizes, DCHD will not regularly have Pfizer vaccine in its inventory, but larger chain pharmacies such as Walgreens and CVS will likely have supply and be scheduling appointments.

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