

South Hilyard

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Medical Clinic

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www.southhilyard.com

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COVID-19 vaccine news

We have (FINALLY!) been granted authorization to provide the Moderna vaccine. We have been doing a lot of preplanning, and as soon as we are given vaccines, we will be initiating vaccine clinics.

We have prepared a list of all of my patients from ages 102 to 65. After we immunize 80 of my patients who are in Group 1A, we will be able to start working down the list and hope to provide vaccines to all 1,008 patients in that age group as soon as we possibly can.

As you know, vaccine supplies are limited. As soon as we are notified that we will receive any, we will call patients and schedule them for their visits. We will vaccinate you just as quickly as we are given vaccine to do so. Please also register with Lane County at lanecounty.org/coronavirus for preregistration and scheduling updates of when the vaccine is available for your age group. Please get the vaccine from whomever can vaccinate you first.

The Moderna vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. It requires two doses. The vaccine contains the messenger RNA information for the attachment protein (called the spike protein) that the virus uses to enter cells. The messenger RNA cannot become incorporated into DNA, and therefore it cannot become part of your own genetic structures.

This little piece of messenger RNA, when it enters your cells via the vaccine, goes to your cells' protein factories and induces them to make the attachment protein (M protein), which is then released. This M protein is foreign to you, and it elicits a strong reaction from your immune cells. They are stimulated, multiply rapidly, and produce a lot of antibodies against the M protein. This response produces partial immunity within 12 days of receiving the vaccine (approximately 60% protection). This gradually rises to about 80% protection prior to the second dose. With the second dose, the immune cells are further stimulated, multiply rapidly, and produce an army of anti-coronavirus immune cells in your body that will then stay there and are able to be activated by an exposure to the real virus and fight it off quickly. This results in 94% immunity to the coronavirus infection with the first strain, from which this vaccine was developed.

The COVID-19 virus has produced several new strains, one of which is only 50% to 60% susceptible to the Moderna vaccine. This still confers substantial protection against hospitalization and dying from COVID-19. It is my feeling that we will be seeing the introduction of a booster vaccine that will target this and other new strains. I predict that at least for a period of years, we will be looking at booster vaccines against COVID-19, similar to getting a flu shot on an annual basis. These have not yet been developed, but they are already in process.

Family Practice
General Practice

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The messenger RNA in the vaccine is unstable. It degrades within a couple of weeks, leaving you with no residual virus messenger RNA. However, by that time, you have already a small army of pre-armed immune cells, which is then greatly augmented by the booster dose four weeks later.

We are not stockpiling any Moderna vaccine to give to my staff and patients. The health department has assured me that they will provide me with sufficient supplies for second doses for anyone for whom they provide me with a primary dose. I think that this policy is very important, as it allows me to vaccinate and protect as many of my beloved patients as I possibly can.

If at any time you have an opportunity to receive a vaccine from another provider before I can obtain the vaccine for you, please avail yourself of that opportunity! I would like to see every one of my patients immunized as soon as we possibly can.

Unfortunately, vaccination and personal safety do not translate into being unable to spread the COVID-19 virus to others. While contagiousness is definitely decreased once you have developed immunity, you still can grow virus in the surface of your nose, which can then be spread to others. If they are susceptible, this could result in very serious illness or death. Consequently, I beg you to continue using masks and appropriate distancing for encounters with all people who are not in your personal bubble. Between vaccination and our protection of our personal contacts and community, we will conquer this pandemic!

With love and affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Terry Copperman'.

Terry Copperman, M.D.

TC:gl