FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19: Vaccination Information
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

With the arrival of the vaccines, there has been a lot of excitement.

There are currently two vaccines being distributed. It appears there may be a third vaccine available soon.

As the vaccine gets distributed to the states and then to the counties, each county is doing its best to get the vaccine to as many as they can.

The vaccine is typically given in the upper arm. Once given, the recipient waits 15-30 minutes, being observed for any reactions that might be considered an allergic reaction, before going home. The most recent report from the CDC is that there have only been 10 allergic reactions in 4 million doses of the Moderna vaccine given. Moderna is the vaccine being used by Clayton County. The Pfizer vaccine requires storage that is not available in Clayton County.

For both Pfizer and Moderna, a second vaccination is required. The booster dose for Pfizer is at 21 days and for Moderna, 28 days. It is important to get the second dose in order to get the full protection of the vaccine.

After receiving a vaccine, it is not unusual to develop side effects over the following 36 hours. The most common side effect is a sore arm, similar to after receiving a tetanus shot. Other side effects include fatigue, feeling tired, body aches, headaches, low grade fevers and chills. Typically, the symptoms resolve within 12 hours of starting.

The side effects after the first dose are not necessarily the same after the second dose. Sometimes the side effects are worse, sometimes less. The side effects are a good sign that the body is responding to the vaccine.

Having received both my first and second dose, I can confirm that the symptoms do occur. After the first dose, I had a sore arm within hours of getting the shot. The arm stayed sore for a few days. After the second dose, I felt good, until the next morning. I awoke with a headache, fatigue and body aches. I took Tylenol and went back to bed. By the afternoon, I was feeling much better, and by supper time, all of my symptoms were gone.

Multiple questions have been out there regarding if you should or shouldn’t take Tylenol or Ibuprofen before or after receiving the injection. There is a theory that taking it before the injection may dampen or reduce the effectiveness of the vaccine; however, this is not proven. In fact, it has been proven that it does not have an effect on the vaccines given to children. The current recommendation is that if you routinely take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or ibuprofen, continue to take it. If not, avoid taking it prior to the vaccination. Once you have been given the vaccine, if you start to have symptoms, it is safe and appropriate to take either Tylenol (acetaminophen), ibuprofen or other pain relievers.

If you are concerned about the symptoms you develop after being vaccinated, call and talk with your healthcare provider.
Once you have been vaccinated, it will still be important to wear your mask, wash your hands and watch your distance. The vaccine prevents you from becoming ill if you are exposed to COVID-19; however, you may still become infected with it and be able to spread it to others. When the number of active infections becomes low, and few cases are being seen, we may then be able to get rid of masks.

Clayton County Public Health is working with the Health Care Providers of Clayton County to set up clinics across the county in the coming weeks and months to distribute the vaccine as quickly as they can. Due to limited doses of vaccines available, this process will not go as quickly as we would like but will occur as quickly as we are able. Multiple meetings occur every week and sometimes every day in order to be prepared for the next step or change that may occur.

Please be patient. The goal is to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible, and we are committed to doing our best.

Be Well, Be Safe and Be Kind.