



Township of Montville

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COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Currently, the Morris County Vaccination Mega Site is the central location for providing available COVID-19 vaccine to those who live, work, and study in New Jersey who currently qualify under the State of New Jersey guidelines as eligible recipients:

- healthcare workers, including those working in pharmacies;
- long-term care residents and staff, including those in prisons and psychiatric hospitals;
- first-responders;
- people aged 65 and older;
- individuals ages 16-64 with serious medical conditions; and
- smokers.

We want to strongly encourage every Montville Township resident who meets the above mentioned criteria to pre-register for the vaccine, using one of the following methods:

- NJ State Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS): <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>
- NJ Vaccination Call Center: 1-855-568-0545 for general questions about the vaccine, about vaccination locations, and for assistance pre-registering with NJVSS and making appointments for those who can't access or have limited access to the internet.
- Morris County Mega Site: <https://atlantichealth.org/covidvaccine>

Currently, the demand for the vaccine far exceeds the supply. There are 4 million eligible recipients, and the amount of vaccine received in the state was 100,000 doses each week, and was just recently increased to 130,000 doses each week. This is obviously still not enough vaccine to meet current demand. While there are numerous locations in the state and in our county to administer the vaccine, these sites have no choice but to limit appointments based on the small amount of vaccine they receive each week. The amount of vaccine being received by the state each week is dictated at the state and federal level. Montville Township officials, including the Health Officer, are in daily contact with state and county officials to stay updated on the latest developments, and to advocate on behalf of our community.

We understand and share everyone's concern regarding the limited amount of vaccine available compared to the number of those seeking it, the rise in positive cases during the ongoing fall/winter surge, and recent news reports of more highly-transmittable variants of COVID-19. In light of these conditions, we again strongly encourage everyone who is an eligible recipient to pre-register with the state and county systems so that they can make an appointment as soon as they become available. We also strongly urge again, as we have since the beginning of the pandemic, for our community to continue to follow recommended health and safety precautions to reduce your risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19: practice social distancing, wear effective face coverings, frequent hand-washing, avoid large in-person gatherings, monitor yourself and those in your household for symptoms, seek testing should symptoms arise, and follow recommended quarantine/isolation guidance when necessary.

We also recognize that some of our residents are interested in learning more about the COVID-19 cases in our community. In addition to the wealth of state and county level information available at the state's COVID Dashboard at <https://covid19.nj.gov/index.html#live-updates>, the Montville Township Health Department reports municipal-level data on their COVID-19 page at <https://www.montvillenj.org/402/COVID-19>. This page is updated by the Health Department each business day, and contains a variety of data pertaining to the cases here in our community that residents may be interested in. In an effort to reduce mixed communications, since March 2020, we have dedicated the Health Department COVID-19 page to be the central information depot.

One item of data that we have received some inquiries on is the number of deaths due to COVID-19. Please be aware that the Township was advised, well in advance of the pandemic, by the NJ Office of Vital Statistics and Registry (which oversees and regulates all vital statistics information in the state, and which includes births, marriages, and deaths) that municipalities are not to release data on deaths due to any specific cause. The Health Department does report each month the number of people who died within the Township's boundaries, and the number of Montville Township residents who died (regardless of where that death took place). These two pieces of data are included in the Health Department's monthly activity reports and COVID-19 summary reports, which are sent to the Township Committee, and presented to the Board of Health at each of their meetings. Copies of these two reports can be found on the Montville website at <https://montvillenj.org/347/Board-of-Health>.

From the data reported, it is clear that in April of 2020, there were a much larger number of reported deaths than would have normally been expected, which corresponds with the surge of cases that was experienced in the spring. It is also important to note that the state is reviewing all COVID-19 cases that were reported to have ended in death, as well as all deaths that list COVID-19 as a cause. These reviews can remain open for up to a year, and the number of deaths are subject to change during that review process.

Any illness or death in our community, whether due to COVID-19 or otherwise, is a cause for concern and sorrow. This pandemic continues to present numerous challenges, but together, will eventually overcome them. We appreciate the community spirit we have witnessed time and again throughout these unprecedented circumstances. Again, and we cannot urge this strongly enough, please pre-register for the vaccine with both the state and county systems, get a vaccination as soon as you are able to, and continue to follow recommended health and safety precautions.