

HEALTH AND HOPE FOR
ALL ST. LOUIS CHILDREN

DEACONESS
FOUNDATION

INVEST
IN ENDEAVORS THAT
IMPROVE THE HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING
OF CHILDREN

ENGAGE
THE ST. LOUIS REGION
TO COME TOGETHER
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ADVOCATE
FOR CHANGE
IN OUR COMMUNITY

April 6, 2021

Deaconess Community,

In our March Newsletter, we acknowledged the anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic and the traumatic and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and Brown communities. We also recognized the need for equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines so those seeking to be vaccinated in communities with increased risk of illness and death have access to doses of the vaccine.

As the supply of COVID-19 vaccines is steadily increasing in the St. Louis region, over the course of the next few weeks, we hope to provide information and resources that are helpful to you in making an informed decision about vaccination. We will bring insights from people in our community who are deeply engaged in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, share the work of our partners addressing health disparities and invite you to share resources that have been helpful for you and may be shared with others by contacting us at info@deaconess.org.

In this edition, Angela Fleming Brown, CEO of the St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC), addresses inequity in the health care system, provides a list of considerations that may factor into your individual decision to get vaccinated or not, and a link to resources that can help you to make an informed choice for you, your family and/or community. Ultimately, the choice is yours to make.

In service to our children,

Cheryl D.S. Walker
Interim President and CEO
Deaconess Foundation

ANGELA FLEMING BROWN: THE CHOICE IS YOURS



At the St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC), our mission is to improve equitable access and outcomes for uninsured and underinsured residents of St. Louis City and County. Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been committed to working with our partners to make sure access to COVID-19 testing and vaccines are easily accessible in our Black and Brown communities. In partnership with PrepareSTL, we are working to ensure communities of color have the power (knowledge) to prepare and prevail against COVID-19. We have funded COVID-19 testing at our community health centers located in communities of color. In addition, we are advocating for equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines in communities that have been impacted most by the disease.

As a Black woman, I know for many of us, unfortunately, we do not have to look all the way back to the Tuskegee Syphilis Study to understand the fear and distrust of the health care system. Through the growing health disparities, lack of access to health care services and quality of care provided to many people in our communities, we can see the evidence of systemic racism embodied throughout the entire health care system that

continues to give us pause about the care we receive.

Now, we must make a choice to get vaccinated for a disease that has once again disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities. To be cautious about a new vaccine is only natural. I hope you take the time to review the facts to make an informed choice that is best for you and your family. Here are a few things for you to consider:

- What is a vaccine, and how does it work?
- Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?
- What are the side effects?
- Are you or a family member at a higher risk of contracting the disease?
- Is the vaccine easily accessible?



For factual, transparent information, talk to your doctor and/or visit preparestl.com. After weighing the information, I have decided that taking the vaccine is the best choice for me and my family. Whatever choice you make, remember the choice is yours! Don't forget to stay safe by continuing to wear your masks, wash your hands and social distance.

Angela Fleming Brown is the CEO of the St. Louis Regional Health Commission. Angela earned an MPH from Saint Louis University's School of Public Health, and she is a graduate of the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative's Fellows Program. In addition, Angela serves as Co-Chair of the St. Louis Region System of Care, a member of Generate Health's Board of Directors, a Community Advisory Board member for St. Louis ReCast, and a Steering Committee member for the St. Louis Chapter of National Association of Health Services Executives.

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PREPARESTL



PrepareSTL is a collaborative campaign powered by the Missouri Foundation for Health in partnership with the Regional Health Commission, the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and other community health organizations to help prepare all St. Louisans for the effects of the COVID-19 response, how to stop its spread, and how to survive the pandemic physically, emotionally, and economically.

Deaconess Foundation provides funding to PrepareSTL through its Responsive Grant portfolio. The grant supports youth engagement in developing accessible vaccine education resources to help youth and young adults make informed choices regarding their health during the pandemic.

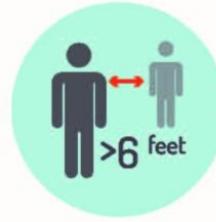
Learn more about PrepareSTL at: preparestl.com.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

The following infographic is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We encourage you to use the information to make an informed decision regarding the vaccine.

Mobile users: Tap on the infographic to view the full-size version.

Vaccines (shots) are one of the tools we have to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.



To stop this pandemic, we need to use all of our prevention tools. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to protect your health and prevent disease. Vaccines work with your body's natural defenses so **your body will be ready to fight the virus**, if you are exposed (also called immunity). Other steps, like wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth and staying at least 6 feet away from other people you don't live with, also help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Studies show that COVID-19 **vaccines are very effective** at keeping you from getting COVID-19. Experts also think that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. These vaccines cannot give you the disease itself.



The vaccines are safe. The U.S. vaccine safety system makes sure that all vaccines are as safe as possible. All the COVID-19 vaccines that are being used have gone through the same safety tests and meet the same standards as any other vaccines produced through the years. A system in place across the entire country that allows CDC to watch for safety issues and make sure the vaccines stay safe.

Different types of COVID-19 vaccines will be available. Most of these vaccines are given in two shots, one at a time and spaced apart. The first shot gets your body ready. The second shot is given at least three weeks later to make sure you have full protection. If you are told you need two shots, make sure that you get both of them. The vaccines may work in slightly different ways, but all types of the vaccines will help protect you.

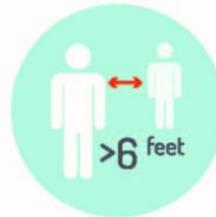


The vaccines may cause side effects in some people, like sore muscles, feeling tired, or mild fever. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a day or two.

Having these types of side effects does NOT mean that you have COVID-19. If you have questions about your health after your shot, call your doctor, nurse, or clinic. As with any medicine, it is rare but possible to have a serious reaction, such as not being able to breathe. It is very unlikely that this will happen, but if it does, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

When you get the vaccine, you *and* your healthcare worker will both need to wear masks.

CDC recommends that during the pandemic, people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside their household, when in healthcare facilities, and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine.



Even after you get your vaccine, you will need to keep wearing a mask that covers your nose **and** mouth, washing your hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from other people you do not live with. This gives you and others the best protection from catching the virus. Right now, experts don't know how long the vaccine will protect you, so it's a good idea to continue following the guidelines from CDC and your health department. **We also know not everyone will be able to get vaccinated right away, so it's still important to protect yourself and others.**

Learn more about Covid-19 vaccine safety: cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines.

Regional COVID-19 Vaccination Registration and Appointment Information

The supply of COVID-19 vaccines is steadily increasing in the St. Louis region. In Missouri, all adults will become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by April 9. In Illinois, anyone 16-years-old or older will become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on April 12, however in Madison and St. Clair Counties, anyone 16-years-old or older in those counties are now eligible.

Most vaccinations are administered by appointment only. For those seeking an appointment, additional information may be found by accessing the links below:

[Missouri Vaccine Navigator](#)

Residents may register with the state to get notified of vaccination events and available appointments across the state. Residents without internet access may call the state's COVID-19 hotline at 877-435-8411 for registration assistance.

[St. Louis City](#)

[Madison County, IL](#)

Individuals may schedule a vaccine appointment.

[Monroe County, IL](#)

Individuals may register to be notified of upcoming vaccination opportunities.

[Affinia Healthcare](#)

Residents may register to be notified of upcoming vaccination opportunities.

[St. Louis County](#)

Residents may register online for vaccinations through the St. Louis County Department of Public Health. The Department will follow up with residents based on eligibility to receive the vaccine and available appointments.

[St. Charles County](#)

Residents may register online for vaccinations through the St. Charles County Department of Public Health. The Department will follow up with residents based on eligibility to receive the vaccine and available appointments. Residents without internet access may call the county's COVID-19 hotline at 636-949-1899.

[Jefferson County](#)

Residents may register for appointments. Residents without internet access may call the county's vaccine registration line at 636-789-8941.

[St. Clair County, IL](#)

Individuals may register for a vaccine appointment with the St. Clair County Health Department and access registration links for community partners.

Appointments are available for adult residents of specific zip codes. Residents may schedule their own appointments.

[CareSTL Health](#)

Residents may call 314-367-5820 for information about vaccines.

[BJC Healthcare](#)

Individuals may register to be notified of upcoming vaccination opportunities. Individuals without internet or e-mail access may call 314-273-1252.

[Mercy](#)

Individuals may register to be notified of upcoming vaccination opportunities. Individuals without internet access, may call to request a COVID-19 vaccine: 1-833-364-6777.

[SSM](#)

Individuals may schedule a vaccine appointment.

[St. Luke's](#)

Individuals may register to be notified of upcoming vaccination opportunities.

Regional COVID-19 Testing Information and Locations

COVID-19 testing continues to be an important factor in suppressing the pandemic. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends that anyone with any signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. The CDC also recommends testing for those who have had close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with confirmed COVID-19, with the caveats that: (1) Fully vaccinated people with no COVID-19 symptoms do not need to be tested following an exposure to someone with COVID-19 and (2) People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three (3) months and recovered do not need to get tested following an exposure as long as they do not develop new symptoms.

Testing is also recommended for people who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot physically distance as needed to avoid exposure, such as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in crowded or poorly ventilated indoor settings

COVID-19 testing is still available across the St. Louis Metropolitan region. Information and testing site locations may be found by accessing the links below:

[St. Louis City](#)
[St. Louis County](#)
[Jefferson County](#)
[St. Charles County](#)
[St. Clair County, IL](#)
[Madison County, IL](#)

Getting tested can still help to mitigate transmission of COVID-19. The goal is to detect cases early to help reduce further spread of the virus.

FURTHER READING

All Missouri adults eligible for COVID vaccine April 9th

Emily Woodbury | *St. Louis Public Radio*
Featured: *The St. Louis American*

All Missouri adults will become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine by April 9, and all those 16 and older in Illinois become eligible on April 12. Yet, many still have questions — such as how the vaccines work against coronavirus variants and which vaccine is the best to receive.

“Whatever vaccine is available to you the earliest is the best one for you,” said Dr. Dan Hoft, an infectious disease physician, “because they all are shown to be safe, they all work, and the earlier we get people vaccinated, the earlier we can get back to normal life.”



Hoft is the director of St. Louis University’s Center for Vaccine Development. He joined Tuesday’s St. Louis on the Air to discuss the latest vaccine news and answer listener questions, such as why one vaccine would lead to a stronger bodily reaction than others and why some people experience an arm rash after receiving the vaccine.

SLU’s Center for Vaccine Development was involved in developing and testing the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines currently in use. Now, the center is starting a clinical trial that aims to develop a second-generation vaccine that will be effective against coronavirus variants. [Read more>>>](#)



Why Are Black Communities Being Singled out as Vaccine Hesitant?

Positioning vaccine distrust as a problem specific to African Americans is not only inaccurate and unjust — it’s also harmful.

Elizabeth Yuko | *Rolling Stone*

When Dr. Thomas Beavers concluded Sunday service on March 15th, 2020, he never imagined that it would be the last time he’d see congregants fill the pews of the [New Rising Star](#)

[Church](#) — affectionately known as “The Star” in the Eastlake community of Birmingham, Alabama — for at least a year. Since then, Beavers, who serves as pastor to approximately 3,800 members of the church, has held weekly services online.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Beavers says that many members of The Star had questions similar to those being asked elsewhere in the country — like whether Covid-19 is real, and why it meant suspending in-person worship. “When people started hearing of Covid-19, and how bad it was, there was a lot of disbelief,” Beavers tells *Rolling Stone*. “And then when people started seeing loved ones dying of Covid-19, the disbelief immediately turned to fear — of both the virus and the unknown. Then, we saw that not only did Black people get it, but when we got it, we were not doing as well as our Caucasian counterparts.”

Once the Covid-19 vaccine rollout began at the end of 2020, Beavers found himself addressing other areas of concern within his community. [Read more>>>](#)

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