



CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

115 4th Street South, Great Falls, MT 59401 • 406-454-6950

NEWS RELEASE

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Cascade County Lowers COVID-19 Vaccination Age & Returns to Online Scheduling

Great Falls, MT – The Cascade City-County Health Department would like to announce that individuals age 60-69 with qualifying health conditions* and all individuals 70+ are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

Additionally, the Cascade County vaccine waiting list will not be maintained going forward. The waiting list has become an unsustainable drain on limited staffing resources, due to the following:

- Duplicate entries, including from people who had already scheduled appointments online
- People putting themselves on the waitlist then receiving the vaccine elsewhere—including at the VA, Indian Family Health Clinic, Malmstrom, or select local pharmacies
 - o Anyone eligible for vaccination at the VA, Malmstrom, or Indian Family Health Clinic should seek vaccination there first
 - o Pharmacies are still receiving very limited doses of vaccine

Furthermore, the waiting list is becoming less necessary. We are expecting continual shipments of vaccine, in greater amounts, and the vaccine will only become *more* widely available throughout Cascade County as time goes on.

If you are unable to book your appointment online, please ask only one trusted friend or family member to help you. **Take care that only one appointment is booked under your name!**



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This Thursday, 2/18/21, at 9 a.m., the online portal at <https://www.benefis.org/COVIDvaccine> will reopen. This time, 3,300 slots will be made available. Again, individuals age 60-69 with qualifying health conditions* and all individuals 70+ are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

*Qualifying health conditions in Tier 1B of [Governor Gianforte's vaccination plan](#) include:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions (incl. heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, etc.)
- Immuno-compromised state from solid organ transplant
- Severe obesity (BMI > or = 40 kg/m²)
- Sickle cell disease
- Diabetes types I & II
- On a case by case basis, medical providers may include individuals with other conditions that place them at elevated risk for COVID-19 related complications

That means that we will have two weeks' worth of vaccination appointments opening up at once. Included in these appointments are slots for two Saturday clinics: February 27 and March 6. This should assist people who work during the week or who need help or transportation from relatives who work Monday through Friday.

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For media opportunities, call Anna Attaway: 406-217-8578

If you are a member of the public, please call 406-454-6950