

features

Coronavirus vaccines have arrived

MADISON GRAVER
Reporter

Despite no one originally knowing how long the development of a coronavirus vaccine would take, around one year after the start of the pandemic, there are now three vaccines that have begun to be administered around the United States.

For months, there was talk as various pharmaceutical companies around the world began their work on creating a vaccine that would potentially bring an end to this pandemic.

After months of research, lab testing, clinical trials and examining results, the FDA issued the first emergency-use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and just a week later issued the same authorization for the Moderna vaccine.

On Feb. 27, the FDA issued the third emergency-use authorization for the vaccine from Janssen Biotech, the pharmaceutical company of Johnson & Johnson.

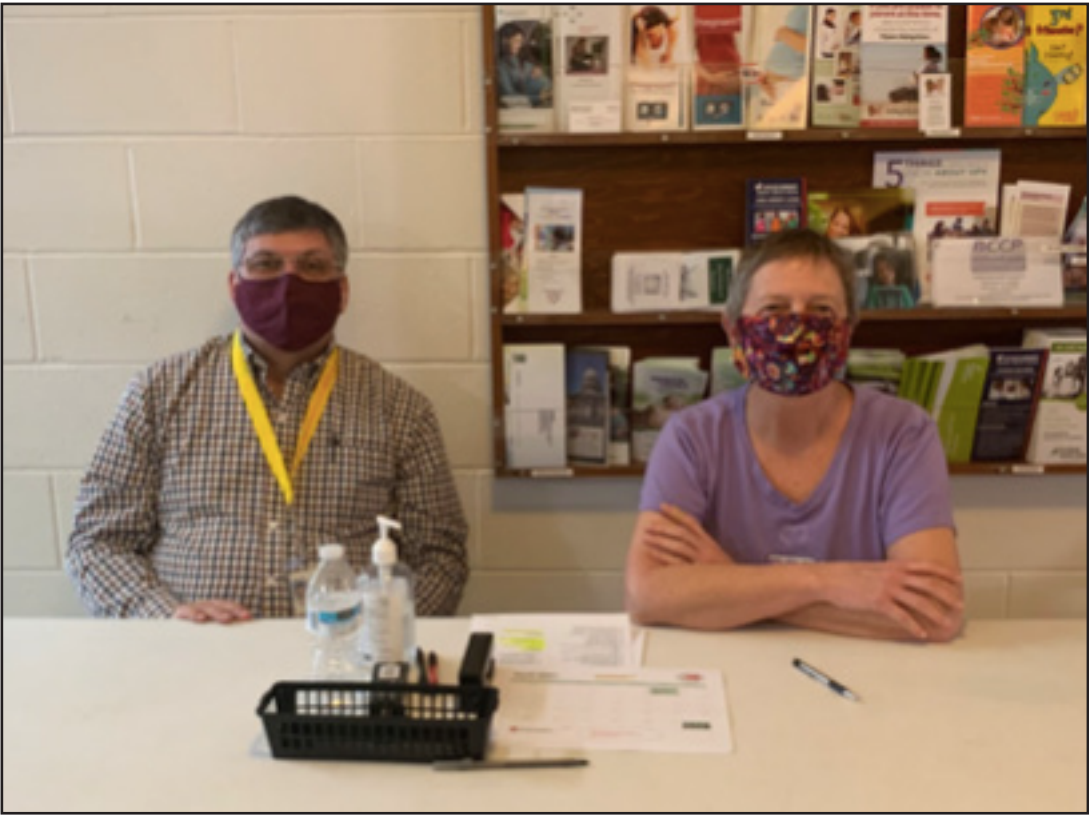
These three vaccines are currently the only ones to have been approved by the FDA for emergency use, but there are

been evaluated in tens of thousands of participants in clinical trials and passed the FDA's rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency-use authorization.

Josh Sexton, the Covid-19 response specialist at the Ashland County Health Department, urges individuals who are skeptical of the vaccine to do their own research and utilize reliable sources to find out information regarding the vaccine.

"I'd urge them to do their research, but make sure it's factual research," he said. "Get it from credible sources, contact a health professional or the health department. Especially if you're hesitant due to medical conditions, reach out to your primary care physician because they should be able to tell you if you should be getting the vaccine. Also, don't go on Facebook and read what's on social media because so many of those are basically clickbait."

With Sexton's job at the health department qualifying him as an essential worker, he has already received both doses



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The Ashland County Health Department holds vaccine clinics weekly as they attempt to vaccinate as many Ashland County residents as they can. Employees and volunteers assist in registering individuals once they arrive and monitor them in the 15 minutes following their vaccination.

immune system that's producing those protein spikes and building the antibodies, that's what makes you feel so bad," she said.

Owens said she is a firm believer in vaccines and did not

think twice about whether or not she was going to get it when one became available.

"I'm honestly surprised that we did get it so quickly," she said. "I was foreseeing it in the Fall of 2021. At my age, the way I look at it is that I'm going to give it a shot, so to speak, because for me even though I had some reactions from it, that only lasted for a day whereas Covid might be fatal for someone my age."

Once individuals receive both doses of the vaccine, it takes around seven days to be fully immune with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 14 days with the Moderna vaccine.

This has raised the question for a lot of people about whether receiving the vaccine means not having to wear masks and social distance anymore.

Unfortunately, since the vaccine rollout is still ongoing and a large percentage of people still have not received it, Sexton said wearing masks and social distancing should still be enforced.

"It will help supplement the vaccination process and the herd immunity," he said. "They're also not super clear on if you can still be a carrier once you've gotten the vaccine. As this rolls out and more people get the vaccine, they'll be able to figure out if the vaccine offers enough protection

that we won't need masks soon or if it's something that we're going to have to wear masks and have everyone get vaccinated and eventually it will work through the system and get herd immunity that way."

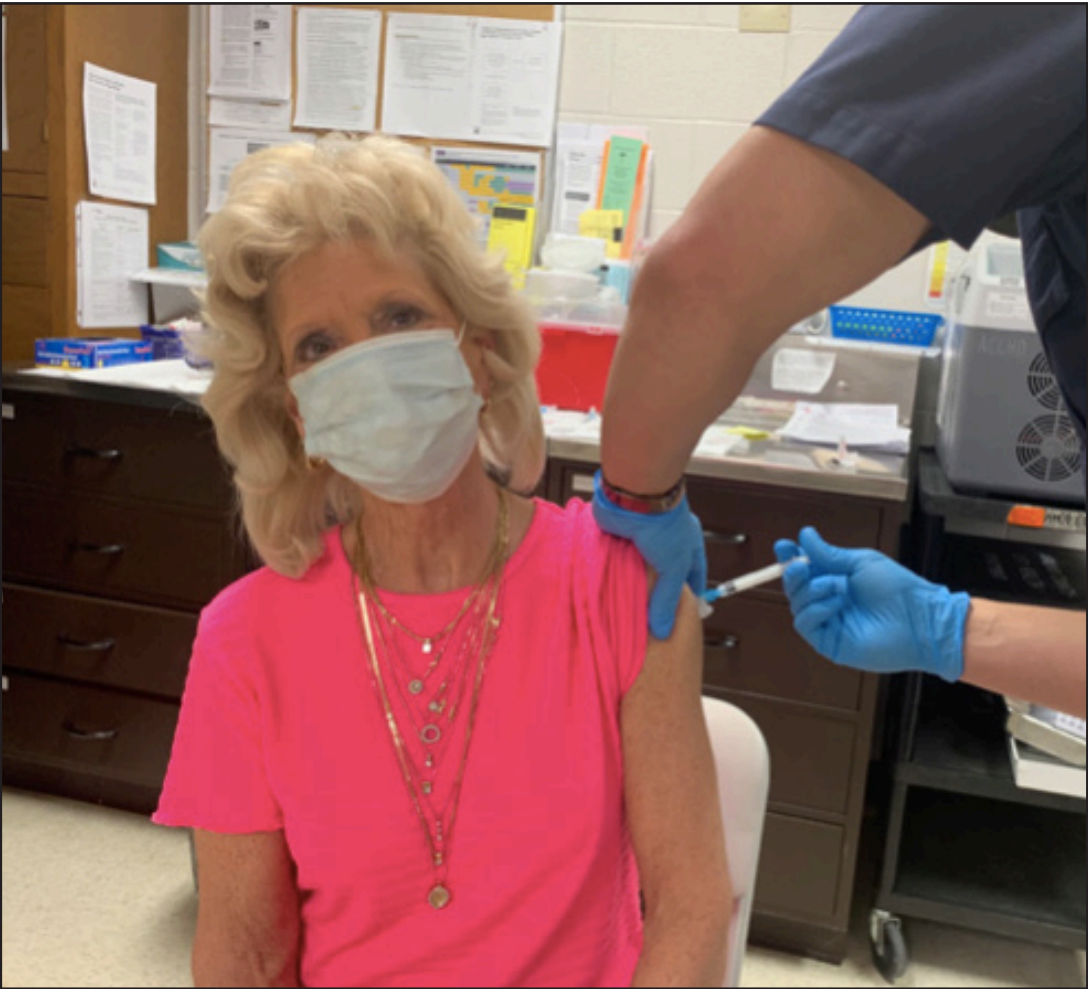
Due to the vaccine being new and some individuals still on the fence about its reliability, it has caused false information and clickbait to be spread across social media.

Some users do not check the validity of the information they are reading, which Sexton said then leads to false information being spread and more unnecessary doubt being put into people's minds.

Both Sexton and Owens urge curious individuals to go to credible and reliable sources like the CDC and FDA websites, or more local websites such as the Ohio Department of Health or the Ashland County Health Department.

As more vaccines become available and the general public can begin getting vaccinated, Owens encourages everyone to participate if they are able.

"It is safe and I think that it's the best thing we can do to help get this virus under some sort of control and help to eliminate it if that's possible," she said.



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Ashland County resident, Dee Gordon, attended the vaccine clinic held at the Ashland County Health Department on Mar. 3 to receive her first dose of the vaccine.

others going through clinical trials and are on their way to being approved.

According to an article from The New York Times, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, called the authorization of these vaccines "a historic moment."

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two separate doses given at 21 and 28 days apart, respectively.

According to the CDC, as of Feb. 28, over 96 million vaccines have been distributed and over 75 million vaccines have been administered.

Being that the vaccine was created and distributed so quickly, it has made some people apprehensive about its safety and reliability.

However, the CDC has extensive information on their website detailing why the currently available vaccines are safe and why they should be trusted.

The CDC's website ensures that the Covid-19 vaccines are "safe and effective" and have

es of the Moderna vaccine and has given positive feedback about the experience.

Although, he did experience a few side effects after both doses, including a sore arm and fatigue after the first dose and achiness and a low fever after the second dose.

Experiencing side effects from the Covid-19 vaccines is not uncommon, as the CDC states that some of the most common are pain and swelling at the site of the shot, fever, chills, fatigue and headaches.

Patty Owens, registered nurse in AU's student health center, also received both doses of the Moderna vaccine and experienced similar side effects as Sexton, with the addition of chills and a headache after the second dose.

Though Owens has not experienced side effects like those after a vaccine before, she wants to remind people that it is a normal occurrence and not something to worry about.

"I have not responded like that to a vaccine before, but it's not actually a response to the vaccine, it's your own im-



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Similar to Gordon, Ashland County resident Dan Ames received his first dose of the vaccine at the Health Department's Mar. 3 vaccine clinic.