According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, the first groups eligible to receive the vaccines are front-line caregivers. You may be starting to think about getting a COVID-19 vaccination when it's available to you. Here are answers to a few commonly asked questions about the vaccine.

How do I know the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?
All vaccines require extensive research, documentation and closely monitored clinical trials to determine effectiveness and safety before being submitted by pharmaceutical companies for approval. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and availability of vaccines in the United States. The FDA requires extensive testing by manufacturers before making vaccines available to the public to protect safety and identify any potential side effects.

What are the risks of the vaccine?
The FDA's rigorous testing helps ensure that vaccines are safe and highly effective. However, all medications, including vaccines, carry a small risk of side effects. Most common side effects are identified in clinical trials before the vaccine is approved, but less-common side effects may not be detected until the medicines or vaccines are more widely available. That's why vaccines are continuously and carefully monitored for possible side effects even after they are licensed.

Continue to take care of your health and help reduce exposure.
We are here for you and your family. And remember that there are steps you can follow to help protect yourself and your family:
- Get your annual flu shot.
- Wear a mask or face covering when you're not at home.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay away from those who are sick.
- Practice social distancing (6 feet).
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Don't delay – get the care you need, when you need it.
Now, more than ever and as we wait for vaccine availability across the country, it is important to take care of your health. When you have concerns about new symptoms or have questions about your health, call your doctor to schedule an appointment and ask about virtual visits.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html

https://healthcare.ascension.org/covid-19/covid-vaccine