



Evan Vucci/AP Photo

President Joe Biden speaks at the White House about efforts to combat COVID-19 on Tuesday.

Biden vows all adults can get vaccine by end of May

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, LINDAA. JOHNSON and ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said Tuesday the U.S. expects to take delivery of enough coronavirus vaccine for all adults by the end of May — two months earlier than anticipated — and he pushed states to get at least one shot into the arms of teachers by the end of March to hasten school reopenings.

Biden also announced that drugmaker Merck will help produce rival Johnson & Johnson's newly approved one-shot vaccine, likening the partnership between the two drug companies to the spirit of national cooperation during World War II.

"We're now on track to have enough vaccine supply for every adult in America by the end of May," Biden said.

Despite the stepped-up pace of vaccine production, the work of inoculating Americans could extend well into the summer, officials said, depending both on the government's capacity to deliver doses and Americans' willingness to roll up their sleeves.

In Oregon, the state will receive 34,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Every county will receive 100 doses this week.

"Because doses will be limited for the first few weeks, the state has committed some allocations to addressing access issues for some Oregonians who've experienced barriers to getting vaccinated," said Jonathan Modie, a spokesman for the Oregon Health Authority.

About 4,800 doses will go to local public health authorities to vaccinate Oregonians living in adult foster homes and other in-home senior populations.

Walmart and Bi-Mart, two new partners in the state's pharmacy vaccinations program, will also receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Additional doses will go to some unspecified health systems in the state.

Biden's announcements quickly raised expectations for when the nation could safely emerge from the pandemic with the promise of speedier vaccinations, but even as he expressed optimism, Biden quickly tempered the outlook for a return to life as it was before the virus hit.

"I've been cautioned not to give an answer to that because we don't know for sure," Biden said, before saying his hope for a return to normal was sometime before "this time next year."

As Biden spoke, states across the country were moving to relax virus-related restrictions. This despite the objections of the White House and the nation's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who have warned against any relaxation of virus protocols until more Americans are vaccinated.

In Texas, GOP Gov. Greg Abbott moved to lift his state's mask-wearing mandate and a host of other limitations. Michigan's Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer eased capacity limits on restaurants and both public and residential gatherings.

Fauci has previously said the nation must achieve a vaccination rate of about 80% to reach "herd immunity." Only about 8% of the population has been fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, though the pace of vaccination has been increasing. The U.S. set a new daily record for injections last Thursday and Friday.

In hopes of increasing vaccinations even further, the Biden administration told governors to make preparations to administer even more doses in the coming weeks. More shots are also headed toward the federally backed program to administer doses in retail pharmacies, which federal officials believe can double or triple their pace of vaccination.

More than 800,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will also be distributed this week to pharmacies, on top of the 2.4 million they are now getting from Pfizer and Moderna.

Those pharmacies will be key in getting the vaccines into the arms of teachers — particu-

larly in the roughly 20 states where they have not been prioritized for shots. The aim is to help reopen schools to better educate students who have been at risk of falling behind during the pandemic and reduce the burden on parents who have had to choose between child care and a job.

"Let's treat in-person learning as the essential service that it is," Biden said. Teachers will be able to sign up directly through participating retail pharmacies, the administration said.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki also announced Tuesday that the federal government was increasing supply of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to states next week to 15.2 million doses per week, up from 14.5 million previously. States will also receive 2.8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson shot this week.

On a call with governors Tuesday, White House coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients said states should prepare to administer 16 million to 17 million total weekly doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines by the end of March, climbing to 17 million to 18 million weekly by early April. The supply of Johnson & Johnson doses to states, expected to dip after the initial shipment this week, will climb to 4 million to 6 million weekly doses by the end of March and 5 million to 6 million doses weekly through the end of April.

Officials have said Johnson & Johnson faced unexpected production issues with its vaccine and produced only 3.9 million doses before being cleared for emergency use authorization on Saturday. The company has promised to deliver 100 million doses by the end of June.

Before the approval of the Johnson & Johnson shot, Biden had suggested that it would take until the end of July to have enough vaccine for every adult in the U.S.

Facing questions about the company's slipping delivery schedule, Richard Nettles, vice president of Johnson & Johnson, told lawmakers in Capitol Hill last week that the company had faced "significant challenges" because of its "highly complex" manufacturing process.

Psaki said that an "across-the-administration effort" was required to get the two historic rivals to work together on the vaccines, even though conversations between Johnson & Johnson and Merck have been going on for months.

"There's a difference between conversations and it moving forward," she said.

The White House said Merck would devote two plants to the production process. One would make the vaccine and the other would handle inserting the vaccine into vials and ensuring strict quality controls. Psaki said the Biden administration was using its powers under the Defense Production Act to help Merck retool to work on the production.

Still it was not immediately clear when the effect of Merck's assistance would be reflected in supply. Federal officials have cautioned that setting up the highly specialized manufacturing lines to produce vaccines would take months.

Compared to the two-dose versions produced by Moderna and Pfizer, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is less resource-intensive to distribute and administer, making it critical for U.S. plans to spread vaccinations around the world — but only once Americans are inoculated. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine can be stored for months at refrigerated temperatures, rather than frozen, and doesn't require patients to return for a second dose three or four weeks later.

Johnson & Johnson has set up a global production network that includes brewing bulk vaccine at its Janssen facility in the Netherlands, and with a company in the U.S., Emergent BioSolutions, and another in India, Biological E. Ltd. Other contract manufacturers are lined up to help with later steps, including putting the vaccine into vials, in the U.S., Italy, Spain and South Africa.

Mar 4th-6th
3 Day Sale!

MAIN ST.

Market

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

20% OFF!

All the meat you
can fit in a bag!

3-DAY SALE March 4th-6th



3 Day Meat Sale!

MAIN ST. MARKET

Where the
Meat Lovers Shop!

YOU CAN VIEW OUR FULL AD SEVERAL WAYS

ONLINE AT www.MainStSelect.com

[facebook.com/MainStSelectMarket](https://www.facebook.com/MainStSelectMarket)

IN STORE find our printed ad

MAIN ST. MARKET

191 S. Main Ave., Warrenton

503-861-2271

www.MainStSelect.com