

Bay Area counties gear up for COVID-19 vaccine eligibility expansion

By [Luz Pena](#)

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The day is approaching: come April 1st the entire state will open vaccine eligibility to those 50 and older.

"It is going to be a huge rush. It just is because people have been waiting for this," said UCSF Infectious Disease Specialist and Professor of Medicine, Dr. Monica Gandhi.

Dr. Gandhi says counties need to equip their vaccine teams now and gear up for the upcoming two weeks and expand hours. She is hopeful more vaccine will be available.

"Some of our supply problems which actually were because of the lipid what's called nano particle that had to go around the mRNA vaccine that was making things slow. And then we knew that in February they increased supply of that so it actually makes sense that we're going to have the supply," said Dr. Gandhi.

But counties like Santa Clara say they are concerned the bottle neck will continue to be not having enough vaccine.

"We've had scarcity of vaccine and that continues," said Dr. Marty Fenstershieb, Santa Clara County's COVID-19 testing and vaccine officer.

Santa Clara is projected to receive 58,000 doses of the COVID vaccine on Monday. A number that is not even close to the number of people who will qualify come Thursday.

"The number of people in our county between 50 and 64 where we are now is 400,000 people. That's a lot of people to add to our list," said Dr. Fenstershieb.

On the other side of the spectrum is Contra Costa County. They have already been vaccinating those 50 and older.

Contra Costa County is basically two weeks ahead of state. They are gearing up to vaccinate those 16 and older later this week. This week they have 20,000 open vaccine appointments up for grabs but are asking people to sign up online.

"We have fully vaccinated 25% of Contra Costa Counties 16 and older that's pretty great. We are at 43 - 44% partially vaccinated. So we have been just steadily working on getting people vaccinated and because we get a state allotment and a federal allotment we are suing it and getting it into people's arms," said Diane Burgis Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

If we continue to expedite the process Dr. Gandhi believes we will be closer to herd immunity soon

"I think that if you open it up to everyone April 15th then you need to give the second and third dose that will take a while. That is going to take until the end of June to get everyone in on time. I'm forecasting that by the beginning of July we are going to see herd immunity in California," said Dr. Gandhi.

April 15th the state will open vaccine eligibility for everyone 16 and older.

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