

February -  
March 2021



SOMA  
Two towns for all ages

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### Want to skip the paper copy?

If you would rather skip the paper copy and get this newsletter electronically, please email [SOMA2towns@gmail.com](mailto:SOMA2towns@gmail.com) or call (973) 558-0863.

You can always view the past 3-4 issues of the newsletter on our website under the publication tab, and new issues are posted by the first of the month. Our issues come out February, April, June, August, October and December.

To sign up for our eblasts, please go to our website and click the link under "Sign me Up!"

### The Newsletter for South Orange and Maplewood Residents 60+

#### Updates on the COVID Vaccines

##### How do I get a COVID-19 Vaccine?

You can register to get a COVID vaccine through Essex County by going to their website, [www.EssexCOVID.org](http://www.EssexCOVID.org) or by calling the Essex County COVID Call Center at 973-877-8456. Several large medical practices will be offering vaccines to their patients once they receive doses. Summit Medical Group, Vanguard, Riverside and Atlantic Health are among the medical groups expecting to receive vaccines for their patients. If you go to one of these or other large group practices, you can check with them to see if and when they expect to receive vaccines.

##### Which vaccines are being used?

As of this printing, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Other vaccines being tested by Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca are expected to be approved under EUA by early spring.

##### What is an Emergency Use Authorization?

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may issue an Emergency Use Authorization when certain criteria are met, which includes that there are no adequate, approved and available alternatives. The FDA decision is based in the totality of the scientific evidence available showing the product may be effective to prevent COVID-19 during the COVID -19 pandemic and that the known potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks of the product. All of these criteria must have been met to allow for the product to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### Where do I go and How do I get There?

At the time of this printing, the vaccine site for South Orange and Maplewood residents is the Sears store in Livingston Mall, which has closed and been converted to a vaccination site. The towns will have transportation options for people who do not drive. Please call (973) 558-0863 if you need help with transportation.

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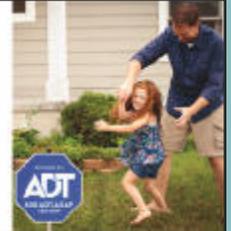


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### Safe Entry Ways

#### A Continuation of our age-friendly homes discussion

Most houses in South Orange and Maplewood have stairs at the entrances - outside steps at a front door and internal steps from a side door. Make them safe and attractive with a few adjustments and alterations.

To prevent falls and slips, make sure you have railings and slip-proof traction. External steps obviously get slippery in wet weather, but as people track in the rain or snow on shoes internal steps also get slippery. Add traction to your steps with non-skid treads on steps, or skid-proof paint that is available for wood, stone and ceramic surfaces.

To make getting in and out easier, put a shelf, bench or small table near the most used entrance, both inside and out. When you are coming into the house or on your way out, this provides a place to put things while you manage keys, shopping bags, purses and anything else you are carrying.

Explore ways to improve your lighting. Stairs should have a switch at both the top and bottom. If you are not up for the cost or mess of having electrical work done professionally, there are a wide variety of inexpensive, battery or solar operated lamps available at hardware stores or online. Solar lamps for foot paths and gardens can be stuck in the ground without any wiring. Battery operated motion sensor lights can be stuck on a wall or staircase to provide temporary lighting without a light switch. Motion sensor lights outside add security as well.

If you are up for a bigger project, alter your entrance. You can cover an exposed door with an awning or overhang that keeps you and your steps dry. You may be able to eliminate steps with an inclined path. In this photo, you can see elements of Universal Design including an extra wide door, a no-step entry from the driveway, an overhang to provide a dry area in front of the door and an easy grip door knob.



*If you need help with repairs or improvements to make your entryway safe, the Morrow Neighbor to Neighbor program may be able to help. Please call 973-558-0863 to discuss.*

### Maplewood Garden Club Meetings are held via Zoom and begin at 7:30 pm

February 1: "Spirit of Place, the Making of a New England Garden"

How does an individual garden relate to the larger landscape and connect to the natural and cultural environment? Bill Noble - lifelong gardener and former Director of Preservation for the Garden Conservancy - will share how they influenced the creation of his own garden in Vermont and inspire you to create a garden rich in context, personal vision, and spirit.

March 1: "Planning and Planting an Herb Garden"

The Herb Lady, Caren White, will take you through the steps of designing and planting an herb garden that is unique to you. Learn how to design an herb garden for optimal growth, how to amend your soil and fertilize your garden, and how to choose the right herbs for your garden whether you use them for cooking, teas, fragrance, crafting, or dyeing.

April 5: "The Hidden Life of Flowers"

Writer & editor Teri Chace will explain why flowers look and behave the way they do, why certain plants are placed in specific families, how flowers attract pollinators, and how pollination works. She will also share photographs & anecdotes from her best-selling title "*Seeing Flowers: Discover the Hidden Life of Flowers.*"

*Maplewood Garden Club speaker's programs follow a brief business meeting and conclude with a live Q&A session. For more details and to join MGC's Zoom meeting, visit [www.maplewoodgardenclub.org](http://www.maplewoodgardenclub.org).*

### Healthier Together: Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations

Grandparents and grandchildren play important roles in each other's lives. According to Generations United, 8 million grandparents provide child care nationally and 10% live with at least 1 grandchild. We learned in our 2019 senior survey that about 10% of our older residents have moved here in the past 10 years to be near their grandkids.

While most of the recent discussion on vaccines has focused on the Coronavirus, vaccines are important at all times to help reduce and prevent the spread of diseases. Last year, SOMA Two Towns for All Ages, the Maplewood Health Department and local videographer Joy Yagid made a documentary asking several community members to share their stories and memories of growing up in a time before vaccines were available to fight communicable diseases. Some talked about classmates who succumbed to disease, or family members stricken with polio. Others had contracted measles or mumps themselves and remember the long, slow recovery. These very real and frightening experiences have faded from current discussion about vaccines as most Americans have never seen a case of measles, polio or whooping cough.

According to Generations United, there is no better way to dispel myths and “fake news” about vaccines than to share real life, personal experiences. Older residents can lead in promoting vaccinations in our community:

- 1 - Set an example. Influence your peers, family and others by staying up to date on your vaccines
- 2 - Speak up. Talk with your family about the importance of staying up to date on vaccines.
- 3 - Share your story. Write a letter to the editor of your favorite newspaper (in print or online) and share why it's important for you to stay up to date on vaccines. Your stories are welcomed here!

Want to continue the discussion with family and friends who aren't sure about the value of vaccines? Check out the Generations United website at [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org), and download their Intergenerational Discussion Guide. For tips and conversation starters, visit [www.bandageofhonor.org](http://www.bandageofhonor.org).

### Check Out Live Exercise Classes Online

Since you can't get out to your favorite exercise class, our fitness instructors are coming to your home!.

Robin Weber and Yvonne Christianson are holding live classes on Zoom, Mondays-Fridays, with 2 classes a day to choose from. Offering Zumba, yoga, chair yoga, senior fitness, toning and more, you can join friends and neighbors in live, interactive classes.

In addition, find links to recorded exercise classes that you can do anytime.

Check out the schedule and information for joining at [www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online)

Other great options for exercising at home:

- Go to Youtube and search for “Sit and Be Fit”
- Go to [www.AARP.org](http://www.AARP.org) and type “exercise” in the search bar for videos and live classes
- Check out the Sing for Hope schedule by going to <https://www.singforhope.org/hap/soma2towns/>

### Make Sure You are Covered

Speak with your doctor at your next visit about the vaccines you need:

Vaccine	Dosage
Influenza vaccine	Once a Year
Pneumococcal vaccine (pneumonia)	2 doses one year apart
Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)	Tdap once, then a tetanus booster every 10 years
Shingles	2 doses spaced 2-6 months apart
Hepatitis A vaccine	2 doses over 6 months
Hepatitis B vaccine	3 doses over 6 months

## SOPAC is Still Entertaining Us

SOPAC's doors may be closed, but the shows go on! By moving to virtual programming, SOPAC is offering a wide range of events you can enjoy from your living room, including films, live stream concerts, poetry readings and more. Examples of unique and new films you can view through [www.SOPACnow.org](http://www.SOPACnow.org) are

*Jimmy Carter: Rock & Roll President*: Part rockumentary, part presidential portrait, this film traces how music helped propel President Carter to the White House and the significant role that music played in his life and work.

*"Ella: Just One of Those Things"*. Ella Fitzgerald was a 15 year-old street kid when she won a talent contest in 1934 at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. Within months she was a star. This film follows her extraordinary journey over six decades as her sublime voice transforms the tragedies of her own life and the troubles of her times into joy.

Other films focus on bands and artists like Harry Chapin and Linda Ronstadt. La Cinemathique Film Club meets one Sunday each month. The calendar is updated frequently with new performances.

Want to learn more? Join SOPAC's Director of Audience Services, Alicia Whavers on **Thursday, February 18 at 4pm** for a presentation of all SOPAC is offering and how to access it. She will teach you how to search for performances you like on the calendar, how to purchase tickets to online events and how to enjoy them at home. Just open Zoom on your computer or tablet and enter **Meeting ID: 844 4509 9344; Passcode: 443265**. Or go to [www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org](http://www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org) and join by going to the Events Calendar on February 18.

Until we can return to live performances in SOPAC, we can still take part in great entertainment, right in our living rooms. Enjoy!

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# NEVER MISS A NEWSLETTER !

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# Local Events

# February 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Maplewood Garden Club 7:30pm (G)	2	3 Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)	4	5 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)
8	9 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	10 Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)	11 Classic & Contemporary Bookclub 7pm (M)	History of Chocolate 11am, register to have supplies delivered by email robertm@jchcorp.org  Special Conversations 1pm (S)
15 <i>Presidents Day</i>	16 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	17 Chef Jesse Jones (S) 4pm Medicare 2021 (X) 4:30pm, see p. 9 for instructions Read around the World (M) 7pm	18 SOPAC online 4pm (X) or zoom ID 844 4509 9344, Passcode 443265	19 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)
22	23 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am Medical Cannabis 7:30pm (X) see p. 9 for instructions Evening of Black LGBT poets (M) 7pm	24 Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)  Intergenerational Activism (X) 7pm	25	26 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)

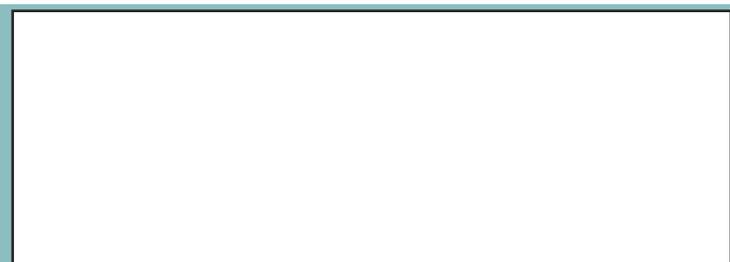
For information on these events, use this key:  
 A = <http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org/>  
 G = [www.maplewoodgardenclub.org](http://www.maplewoodgardenclub.org)  
 M = [www.maplewoodlibrary.org](http://www.maplewoodlibrary.org) or call (973) 762-1622  
 MC = Morrow Church <https://morrowchurch.org/>  
 S = [www.SOPL.org](http://www.SOPL.org) or call 973-762-0230  
 SOPAC = [www.SOPACnow.org](http://www.SOPACnow.org)  
 X = [www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org/events](http://www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org/events)

Check out the events page at [www.somatwotownsforallages.org](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org) for the most up-to-date listings of local events

For Black History Month events, go to: [Maplewoodartsandculture.org/mbhm](http://Maplewoodartsandculture.org/mbhm)

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## Read if You are 40 or Over: The Importance of Balance

By Tonia Moore

After age 40, we decrease our ability to balance. Therefore, it is important for seniors to focus on improving their ability to stay upright. No one wants to fall and there are many ways to modify the risk factors.

### 1. Check your medications:

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications (both prescription and over the counter). Have them check for side effects and interactions.

### 2. Get Your Vision Checked:

Poor vision can increase your chances of falling - you might be wearing the wrong glasses, need glasses or a stronger prescription. Conditions like cataracts or glaucoma limit your vision.

### 3. Build Balance, Strength and Resilience:

There are specific exercise programs that target balance and strength. Exercises that give practice in weight shifting right to left, forward and backwards, up and down will build the discrete muscles that move you in all directions - muscles that will become strong enough to stabilize you when you start to fall.

### 4. Fall Proofing Your Home

About half of all falls happen at home so it is vital to make your home safer.

- Check for things on the floor that you might trip over, like papers, books or clothes.
- Remove small throw rugs.
- Keep items you use in lower cabinets that you can reach without climbing on a step stool.
- Install grab bars in your tub or shower and use non-slip mats in the bathtub or on shower floors.
- Improve the lighting in your home and check that lamp and phone wires are against the wall and not in one's path.

These suggestions are just a start. There are other matters like protecting yourself when you are outdoors in "familiar or unfamiliar territory," not running to answer the phone or the doorbell, handrails on stairs etc. But awareness is a good beginning and safety will develop from there.

Programs like A Matter of Balance and Project Healthy Bones focus on building good posture and greater balance, strength, and flexibility. A Matter of Balance focuses on the whole issue of balancing. It involves physical and environmental aspects. Topics include what to do if you start to fall, how to stop a fall and what to do if you do fall. How to get up from a fall and what to do next are especially important issues. Discussion is a large part of A Matter of Balance, and classes are limited to 12 persons so that everyone has a chance to participate. Participants pledge to try their best to attend all 8 classes in the program.

Project Healthy Bones is a good follow up class as it increases the number of exercises and introduces the use of light leg and arm weights. Participants exercise in a fun and uplifting group.

New Matter of Balance classes and a beginner Project Healthy Bones group will start up online this spring. If you are interested, please email Tonia Moore at [toniamoore9@verizon.net](mailto:toniamoore9@verizon.net) or call (973) 558-0863. Videos of Healthy Bones exercises can be viewed any time at the bottom of the web page [www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online) *Tonia is a trained Matter of Balance and Project Healthy Bones coach and over the past seven years has led classes in South Orange, Maplewood, and Newark.*

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## Volunteers needed

The South Orange/ Maplewood Municipal Alliance is seeking a senior citizen volunteer for the board. The Municipal Alliance is a group of volunteer citizens and community stakeholders that work to prevent substance use especially among youth and other vulnerable populations such as seniors. No additional experience or expertise necessary. The Alliance meets four times a year on a quarterly basis and have been meeting virtually for social distancing purposes.

If you would like to be a senior representative, please contact the Maplewood Public Health Division at (973) 762-8120.

The Achieve Foundation is thankful for the many volunteers to help tutor grammar school students, and is now looking for tutors for Columbia High School students. Subjects vary and include the sciences (biology, physics, chemistry) history, language arts, all at the high school level. If you are a retired teacher or have a good understanding of materials at this level, please contact Amy Forman at 973-762-5600, ext. 1847, or email Amy at [aforman@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:aforman@somsd.k12.nj.us) For information on volunteering with Achieve Foundation, go to their website [www.AchieveFoundation.org](http://www.AchieveFoundation.org)

MEND (Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity) has expanded their services to meet the increased need for food support in Essex County. To help with their pantry, and delivery, go to [www.MENDNJ.org](http://www.MENDNJ.org)

## Sing for Hope offers Online Daily Events through March 2021!

Join Sing for Hope every day and Explore, Immerse, Engage, all from the comfort of your own space. Sing for Hope brings you art lectures, concerts, movement classes, improv and visual arts classes led by Artists from the world's stages. There are arts experiences every day of the week, several times a day. So now's your chance - Explore new sounds, Immerse in culture, Engage in artmaking –It's the perfect time to recenter, refocus, challenge yourself and Enjoy!

See the calendar of events and access all arts experiences at [www.singforhope.org/hap/soma2towns/](http://www.singforhope.org/hap/soma2towns/) Activities are updated frequently and include Opera Classic, Afternoon Doodle, Art Lectures, Mindful Meditation and Wake Up and Stretch, among many others.

## The Black Lives Matter Poetry Project:

Maplewood's Black Lives Matter Poetry Project, a creation of the Maplewood Arts Council, aims to celebrate and shine a light on the words of Black poets. The Poetry Project is a rich assemblage of 38 poems by American Black poets currently installed throughout Maplewood's shared spaces, printed on large banners and posted as part of the public landscape. Poems include those by internationally acclaimed writers such as Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou as well as 13 local poets, including teachers and students.

## Great American Short Stories:

### A Seminar Style Class for Lovers of Literature

Three Thursdays: 11-12:15 p.m., Feb 18, Feb 25, March 11  
Once again, we are pleased to offer this popular class with Dr. Ann Schwarz. We will investigate a selection of twentieth-century American short stories by Edith Wharton and Willa Cather. Classes are a forum for lively discussion with the purpose to gain a greater appreciation for the course's fiction through guided discussion. Our readings are enhanced by socio-historic handouts and if time permits, in class, through excerpts of documentary film. Participants are expected to fully engage in class discussions; our time together is a forum for the exchange of ideas. To sign up for this class, email [SOMA2towns@gmail.com](mailto:SOMA2towns@gmail.com) or call (973) 558-0863.

## AARP TaxAide

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide provides in-person and remote tax assistance free of charge to anyone, with a special focus on taxpayers who are 50 or older or who have low to moderate income. Tax-Aide volunteers are located nationwide, and are trained and IRS-certified every year to make sure they know about and understand the latest changes and additions to the tax code. Due to COVID restrictions, TaxAide will not be operating in the libraries this year but instead at the Burgdorf Center to provide adequate social distancing. Tax preparation will start by appointment only on March 1st and end after the first week in April. To make an appointment, please visit: [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide) or call 973-433-6369

**Medicare Briefing 2021: February 17, 4pm**

What's your burning question - Can I change back to my previous Medicare plan? Why don't the prices I am paying for my medications line up as expected? My premium for my Supplement keeps going up - is there anything I can do about it? Sound familiar? No worries. You see, it's not you. It's the complex Medicare System. Plan changes are typically made in January. You face cost increases for Part B, your plan, and adjustments in what's covered. You may even be getting used to an altogether new plan.

Get answers to your Medicare questions by Nancy Schwartz, Medicare Coach and Licensed Insurance Broker. In this short, focused session, Nancy will guide you through common Q1 Medicare challenges then answer your Medicare questions.

Register by going to the events calendar on [www.SOMATwotownsforallages.org](http://www.SOMATwotownsforallages.org) or by emailing [SOMA2towns@gmail.com](mailto:SOMA2towns@gmail.com) with "Medicare Briefing" in the subject line.

To reach Nancy for questions outside of the presentation, your reach her at [nancy@SmartMedicare.com](mailto:nancy@SmartMedicare.com) or call (862) 216-0445.

**Medical Cannabis  
A Medical Alternative  
February 23, 6:30pm**

Maplewood announced the arrival of a medical cannabis apothecary, TerrAscend, coming soon to Springfield Avenue. This prescription-only dispensary will operate in compliance with state and local laws. To learn more about the apothecary, medical cannabis as a treatment option for chronic illness and pain management, how to get a prescription and to have your questions answered, join us on February 23 at 6:30 pm

Join by opening Zoom on your computer phone or tablet and entering Meeting ID: 879 3507 4584  
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2021! A new year - a very different new year. In other new years we might have shared a good meal together or stayed up and counted down the ball drop with friends. Maybe even gone away for the long weekend. But not this year. This year is different.

We heed those who know and stay home. COVID is spiking - worse than the Spring.

We stay home - we stay safe - we wear a mask - we wash hands - we stay home!

We hope that the vaccine gets to us soon.

We have become good friends with Zoom.

We stay home and wonder what we can do to take our minds off the staying home.

Let's clean house! Or rather, let's look around our home for our story.

WHAT? Yes, you read that right. A well-lived life surrounds you. Tell your story. It might be awkward at first but tell your story!

Tell it to your friends. Tell it to your loved ones. Tell it to your neighbors. Tell it to the children. Tell it to your children.

Get virtual with a friend and swap stories from grammar school dances and high school loves and college successes. Tell someone what you learned from the worst boss you ever

had. Tell the story of how you purchased your first home or that first big raise or the first time you got fired. Tell the story of that time down by the river...or the first time you skipped school or called out sick from work for no reason at all. Don't like Zoom - write it down.

You're not a good storyteller you say? So what? It's your story. Tell it however you'd like. Stumble through the telling - whatever your talents or shortcomings are, you have a unique voice and a unique contribution that you alone can offer. So SHARE! Share away! Share your story - clean your house - dust off the cobwebs and let someone hear your story!

Tell your story - then listen. Listen to the questions. There will be questions you expect. Questions that make you wonder. Questions you hadn't thought about. Questions that will take you back and take you forward. Life is full. Sometimes it catches us with a new year and we ask ourselves 'what are we going to do now?' Take some time and share and learn from each other.

So, when you're wondering what to do with yourself - here is your call to action:

***Tell your story.***

### Online Lifelong Learning Opportunities

This may be a long winter, with continued COVID disruptions. But it is also a perfect time to explore lifelong learning and take advantage of online programs

The Alive Ventures Co-design Community is a collective of adults, aged 60+ who believe that later life is thrilling but feel that current products and services are poorly designed and fail to truly understand them. The community is a collective of cool, hip, fun-loving, creative, and collaborative individuals who want to see themselves in the products that are created for them. No talk of frailty or treating older adults like a problem in this group! What they do:

- Gather for unique virtual events and experiences that are fun for people to join, and help us to learn about what people enjoy.
- Meet virtually to discuss interests, desires and needs for new products to help generate new creative solutions.
- Speak with people one on one to learn more

about their perspectives on everything from life as we get older to what movies they are currently enjoying (phone or virtual).

- Connect with others like us over stimulating and thought provoking conversations

Learn more and how to join at

<https://www.aliveventures.co>

or email [hello@aliveventures.co](mailto:hello@aliveventures.co)

*Note—it is .co not .com*

One Day University has professors offering entertaining versions of their best lectures. You can access the entire video library and join professors for new talks every day. No grades, no tests, no homework - just the pure joy of lifelong learning” You can try it out for 2 weeks FREE, then \$7.95 per month at [www.onedayu.com/nyt](http://www.onedayu.com/nyt)

Courser offers a range of courses, including those towards a degree. Many are offered for free. <https://www.coursera.org>



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## COVID-19 Vaccines Know the Facts

### FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19.

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

### FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests.

Vaccines won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.

### FACT: People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated.

CDC advises that those who have been infected and recovered from COVID can postpone getting vaccinated up to 90 days from initial infection because they have natural immunity that lasts 90 days. At the Essex County sites they will not vaccinate you until 90 days after initial infection.

### FACT: Getting vaccinated can help prevent you from getting sick with COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by

creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness. However until we attain herd immunity in the general population, public health is still asking people (even if they are fully vaccinated) to wear a face mask, practice social distancing, avoid large crowds and wash hands regularly because while the vaccine protects you from getting sick with COVID, there is not enough data to determine whether you can't spread it to others as a carrier, if you were exposed to COVID, through respiratory droplets.

### FACT: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA.

mRNA (messenger ribonucleic acid) can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA).

Note: Before considering any vaccine or health information you find on the internet, make sure it comes from a credible source, is updated on a regular basis, and is supported by facts and other reputable health experts.

*From the NJ State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.*