



Home of the Bethlehem Bach Festival, Bach Festival Orchestra,
and The Bel Canto Youth Chorus

"A National Treasure"

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Vaccination Policy Frequently Asked Questions Effective as of August 1, 2021

What do I need to do if I wish to participate in The Bach Choir of Bethlehem during the 2021-2022 season?

All participants (singers, orchestra musicians, soloists, and volunteers) ages 12 and above are to be fully vaccinated before taking part in any Bach Choir activity (rehearsal, concert, volunteer event). This means that your final vaccine dose was received at least 10 days prior to the date of your first activity.

Which vaccine do I need to receive?

Any of the three vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) available in the USA offer excellent protection and is recommended. Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the best Covid-19 vaccine is the first one available to you. The CDC does not recommend one vaccine over the other.

What will rehearsals and concerts look like in the 2021-2022 season?

The Bach Choir - Our goal is to return to "normal" operational protocols for Bach Choir rehearsals and concerts in the coming year. This means no obligatory mask wearing while singing, no room capacity limits on rehearsal/performance spaces, and no required social distancing between singers.

Bel Canto – In situations in which Bel Canto activities involve children under age 12 who are not yet eligible for the vaccine, we will continue to observe protocols put in place last year including social distancing, masking for unvaccinated children, attention to air exchange in a room and length of rehearsal segments. This policy will change as vaccines are approved for younger children.

I believe I had Covid-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. While it may be true that there is some resultant natural immunity after recovery from Covid-19, it is believed to be not as strong, nor as long lasting, as that provided by the available vaccines.

What should I do if I am not feeling well before rehearsal, concert, or other activities?

Please do not come to rehearsal if you are not feeling well (or running a fever) in order to keep our entire Bach Choir community safe.

Will our audience members need to be vaccinated too?

Decisions regarding protocols for audience members are made by venue owners/managers, not by The Bach Choir of Bethlehem. We will share their protocols well in advance of performances.

I'm excited about the possibility of returning to "normal" rehearsals, but I'm also a little bit nervous, too.

That's completely understandable. We have all been through one of the most extraordinary events of our lifetimes in the last year and a half. It's been a long time that we've been apart, but there's tremendous enthusiasm for being together and SINGING AGAIN! Members of The Choir and The Bach Festival Orchestra have responded with joy and excitement about the start of rehearsals, the return of BACH AT NOON, and our 2021-2022 season. Remember, we are taking this one step at a time, following and monitoring the advice of medical professionals and health experts. We will adapt as necessary.

If I wish to wear a mask while singing in rehearsal, is that okay?

Yes, to a point. Bach Choir singers wishing to remain masked during rehearsals may do so for initial rehearsals. However, there will be a point in each concert cycle when we need to hear ourselves and the ensemble without masks (since that is how we will perform our concerts). At that point, Greg may say something like "this part of rehearsal needs to be sung without masks." Bach Choir concerts will be presented without masks. Bel Canto directors will honor the request of parents for their child. Protocols as described above will continue to be used.

Who will see and have access to my completed "Vaccine Affirmation Form?"

Your completed form will be kept in a secure file in The Bach Choir offices and will be seen only by Bach Choir staff and leadership as appropriate. The form will not be shared outside of the organization.

If I am unvaccinated, may I still participate if I sing with my mask on? No, unless you have received a vaccination exemption for medical or religious reasons from The Bach Choir.

How do I request an exemption?

Submit a written request to The Bach Choir. The Bach Choir COVID committee leadership team will promptly review exemption requests, responding within five business days. Parents of children under age 12 are not required to file an exemption for their child.

Approved exemptions include:

1. Religious exemptions.
2. Medical exemptions with documentation from your provider of an allergy to the COVID-19 vaccines or their components.
3. Medical deferrals for the following circumstances with a note from your provider:
 1. Active pregnancy or active breastfeeding only if the provider is requesting an exemption. The exemption lasts only until you're no longer actively pregnant or actively breastfeeding. Pregnancy and breastfeeding are not contraindications for vaccination.
 2. Immunocompromised individuals only with provider request for an exemption and only for those who have recent (within the past 3-6 months) hematopoietic or solid organ transplant, or on active treatment with Rituximab within the past 3-6 months.
 3. Have received COVID-specific monoclonal antibodies in the past 90 days.

I received a medical or religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Are there different health and safety guidelines I'll need to follow during the 2021-2022 season?

Yes. Individuals who received an approved exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement will need to participate in regular COVID-19 testing, quarantine if exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, wear a mask fully covering nose and mouth in all public spaces, and refrain for participating in Choir activities if there is a serious outbreak.

How long will The Bach Choir require a Covid-19 vaccination as a condition of participation?

We anticipate requiring a Covid-19 vaccination for the duration of the 2021-2022 concert season. We will be ready to adjust or amend our policy as new data comes to light.

Why Vaccines?

After considering the published guidelines of state and federal authorities and investigating the policies and practices being adopted by major chorus in the United States, we have concluded that: 1) vaccines are safe and are the best way to protect our members and those around them from serious illnesses; 2) the COVID-19 vaccine may keep you from getting COVID-19 and lessen symptoms if you do contract the virus; and 3) a fully vaccinated group is the safest, most direct way of resuming full, normal choral activities.

[Learn more about how the government is ensuring the safety of vaccines.](#)

HOW TO OBTAIN A VACCINATION

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All Pennsylvania adults are eligible to be vaccinated. Adolescents ages 12-15 can received the Pfizer vaccine.

STEP 1: FIND A VACCINE PROVIDER

Click “Find a Vaccine” below to find a place to schedule your vaccine.

Vaccine providers include hospitals, urgent care centers, doctor’s offices, and pharmacies.

Providers have to be registered to receive the vaccine — so make sure your chosen provider is listed before continuing to Step 3.

[Find a Vaccine](#)

PHILLY RESIDENTS: The city has its own vaccination plan. [Go here for vaccine information and to find a vaccine near you.](#)

Veterans, their spouses, and caregivers also are eligible to receive vaccine through Veterans Affairs. [Visit the VA website](#) for more information.

STEP 2: CONTACT A PROVIDER TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

Contact the vaccine provider of your choice directly from the map above to schedule an appointment for your vaccine.

When you get the vaccine, you and the person administering the vaccine will both need to wear masks that cover your nose and mouth.

You will receive a vaccination card that tells you which COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. The card also will remind you to return for a second dose if needed.

Learn more about [how to prepare for your vaccine.](#)

STEP 3: BE SURE TO GET BOTH DOSES

The Moderna and Pfizer COVID vaccines are administered in two doses. You will have to return to your vaccination provider to get the second dose of the vaccine before you are done being vaccinated.

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you are fully protected after one dose.

What to expect when getting your vaccine

Getting your COVID-19 vaccine will be much like getting any other vaccine. You should wear short sleeves or a shirt with sleeves that can easily be rolled up to your upper arm.

You’ll receive the injection in your upper arm. Before you leave the vaccine site, you’ll be given the appointment date and time for your second dose, depending on which vaccine you get. It is ideal to return to the same location for your second dose.

In the 24-48 hours after receiving your vaccine, your arm may feel sore. Other potential side effects will likely be mild and may include fever, fatigue, muscle or joint pain, or headache.

People who get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine most often feel a greater immune response after their second dose.

If you feel any of the above side effects, this simply means your body is building protection against COVID-19. It's a good thing!

If you develop symptoms more than 48 hours after receiving the vaccine or they last for more than 24 hours, they could be unrelated to the vaccine. Stay home and contact your doctor.
