

ALL ABOUT YOUR COVID-19 VACCINATION

What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is medicine. It protects you from getting sick.

You get a vaccine by getting a shot in your arm from a nurse or doctor.



What should I know about the COVID-19 vaccine?

There are new COVID-19 vaccines to help keep people from getting sick from the COVID-19 virus. The vaccine is free for all people.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

952 million or 13% of the global population have been fully vaccinated, mostly without ill-effect.

The government makes sure all vaccines are as safe as possible.

Therefore, there is no need to be fearful about the COVID-19 vaccine.

What are the main types of vaccine available?

These are:

- mRNA vaccine (Moderna/Pfizer): messenger RNA vaccines
- Oxford AstraZeneca (Adenovirus/viral vector vaccine).

Will I have any side effects?

People sometimes off colour following their first vaccination but this normally passes after 48 hours. Most do not have any symptoms following their second dose.

Not everyone gets side effects, but if they do, they often include:

- A sore arm from the injection
- Feeling tired
- A headache
- Feeling achy
- Feeling or being sick.

More serious side effects, such as allergic reactions or blood clotting, are extremely rare. To find out about side effects and when you should call NHS 111, see: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/the-vaccines/side-effects-of-the-coronavirus-vaccines>



Will the vaccine make me infertile?

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with fertility or pregnancy.

However, if pregnant, do chat through your decision with a health professional (as some may prefer to wait until the baby arrives where low risk to mum and pregnancy).

Does the vaccine contain parts of human and animal remains? Can vaccines be given to vegans/vegetarians/people of Catholic/Muslim/Jewish faiths?

The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain any animal or egg products or foetal cells or products.

They are therefore suitable for people whose faith or dietary requirements mean they cannot have certain types of meat or who follow a vegetarian diet.

Will the COVID-19 vaccination affect my DNA?

COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

Will I get blood clots?

The risk of getting blood clots is low:

- AstraZeneca vaccine 0.0004%
- Birth control pill 0.05-0.12%
- Smoking 0.18%
- COVID-19 16.5%.

Therefore you are far more likely to suffer blood clots if you get COVID-19 than if you have the vaccine. People under 40 may be offered an alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No, You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment.

The COVID-19 vaccine that you have has been shown to reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease.

It may take a few weeks for your body to build up some protection from the vaccine.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection.

Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

I'm at low risk – why should I bother getting vaccinated?

Getting the vaccination is important for several reasons:

- It can help you stop getting a serious version of COVID-19
- This, in turn, reduces the burden on the NHS so they can treat people with other conditions
- Even if you get a mild version of the virus, you are at risk of developing Long COVID, a condition appearing in many people following COVID-19, which can include some serious physical and psychological symptoms
- If you socially distance and follow mask and hygiene suggestions, you are less likely to pass it on, especially to those who may be at risk
- To protect your family/particularly vulnerable/elderly relatives
- To protect your colleagues and create a healthier workplace
- To help society move towards a safer place
- To enjoy the freedoms that vaccine is now beginning to offer (travel/admittance to events, etc).



Couldn't we just lock our borders?

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is in our community already and is mutating to at least 15 versions, e.g. the Delta variant we hear about.

Life has to go on but government is doing everything it can to ensure those entering the country are tested and isolated if positive.

Virus variants are completely normal and are how a virus behaves to survive and transmit. Vaccines will be modified or developed over time to take account of these changes and are well tested before they are introduced.

Was the vaccine developed too quickly to be safe?

Before vaccines are introduced, they have to be approved by global and national regulatory agencies for safety. They have been widely tested and used on millions of people.



If I've already had COVID-19, do I need a vaccination?

People who have been ill with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated.

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine, even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

Natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, so it's best to be extra-careful.

Once I've had the vaccination, can I go back to life before COVID-19 appeared?

Vaccination can protect you from getting seriously ill and dying from COVID-19.

For the first fourteen days after getting a vaccination, you do not have significant levels of protection.

For a single dose vaccine, immunity will generally occur two weeks after vaccination.

For two-dose vaccines, both doses are needed to provide the highest level of best immunity possible.

While a COVID-19 vaccine will protect you from serious illness and death, we don't know how much it keeps you from being infected and passing the virus on to others, although it has been shown to help.

To help keep others safe, continue to:

- Maintain at least a one to two-metre distance from others
- Cover a cough or sneeze in your elbow
- Clean your hands frequently
- Wear a mask, particularly in enclosed, crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

Always follow guidance from local authorities based on the situation and risk where you live.

Find out more:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>