NHS (Link: www.nhs.uk/)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines

The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines are safe and effective. They give you the best protection against COVID-19.

Who can get a COVID-19 vaccine

COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to:

- people aged 25 and over
- people who will turn 25 before 1 July 2021
- people at high risk from COVID-19 (clinically extremely vulnerable) (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus-clinically-extremely-vulnerable/)
- people with a condition that puts them at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
- people with a learning disability
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people who are a main carer for someone at high risk from COVID-19

You'll be contacted by the NHS when you're eligible.

You do not need to wait to be contacted if you're in a group listed above. You may be able to book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) now.

If you did not book when you were contacted, you're still eligible and can book your appointments anytime.

When will I get the vaccine?

Vaccines were offered to people most at risk from COVID-19 first. They are now being offered to people based on their age.

If you're not eligible yet, wait to be contacted. The NHS will tell you when it's your turn to have the COVID-19 vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.

Find out more:

- who can get the COVID-19 vaccine (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/who-can-get-the-vaccine/)
- how you'll be contacted about your COVID-19 vaccination (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/how-you-will-be-contacted/)

- GOV.UK: phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme (Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-for-older-adults/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-to-phase-2-of-the-programme#who-is-now-eligible-for-the-vaccination)

How to book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments

There are 2 ways to get a COVID-19 vaccine if you're eligible:

- book online now for appointments at a vaccination centre or a pharmacy
- wait to be contacted by your GP surgery and book your appointments with them

The currently available vaccines are given in 2 doses. You usually have the 2nd dose 8 to 12 weeks after the 1st dose.

If you book your appointments online, you can view, cancel or rebook them if you need to.

➔ **Book or manage your COVID-19 vaccination appointments (Link: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/)**

> If you cannot book online, you can call 119 free of charge. You can speak to a translator if you need to.
>
> If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, or are a British Sign Language (BSL) user, you can use textphone 18001 119 or the NHS 119 BSL interpreter service (Link: https://interpreternow.co.uk/nhs119).

Booking your 2nd dose

If you book online, you'll need to book appointments for both doses. You can manage your COVID-19 vaccination appointments (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) to view your appointments and rebook if you need to.

If you have your 1st dose through your GP surgery, you'll be contacted when it's time to book your 2nd dose.

Types of COVID-19 vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in the UK are:

- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine
- Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine
- Moderna vaccine
- Janssen vaccine (available later this year)

Can I choose which vaccine I have?

You cannot usually choose which vaccine you have.

You will only be offered a specific vaccine if you're either:

- pregnant
- aged under 40 and do not have a health condition that increases your risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19

If this applies to you, you'll only be shown appointments for the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine when you book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/).

If you book through your GP surgery, tell them if you're pregnant or under 40.

> You should have the same vaccine for both doses, unless you had serious side effects (such as a serious allergic reaction) after your 1st dose.

How well do the COVID-19 vaccines work?

Anyone who gets COVID-19 can become seriously ill or have long-term effects (long COVID (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/)). The COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and others.

Research has shown the vaccines:

- significantly reduce your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19
- reduce your risk of getting symptoms of COVID-19
- will help reduce your risk of catching and spreading COVID-19

The 1st dose should give you good protection from 3 or 4 weeks after you've had it. You need 2 doses for stronger and longer-lasting protection.

There is a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have a vaccine, so it's important to continue to follow all social distancing guidance (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/what-you-need-to-do/).

> Watch an NHS YouTube video explaining what's in the COVID-19 vaccines and how they work (Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgtWpwkS9u4&list=PLnhASgDToTktp2HIjdyeo2fsI6Agcn1uI&index=5)

COVID-19 vaccines safety and side effects

The COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

They can cause some side effects, but not everyone gets them.

Any side effects are usually mild and should not last longer than a week, such as:

- a sore arm from the injection
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy
- feeling or being sick

More serious side effects are very rare.

Find out more about COVID-19 vaccines safety and side effects (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/safety-and-side-effects/)

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility

You can have a COVID-19 vaccine if:

- you're pregnant or think you might be
- you're breastfeeding
- you're trying for a baby

The vaccine cannot give you or your baby COVID-19.

You'll be invited to have the vaccine when your age group are offered it or earlier if you have a health condition or other reason that means you're eligible.

If you're breastfeeding, you can have any of the COVID-19 vaccines.

If you're pregnant and have not had a vaccine yet, it's preferable for you to have the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. This is because they've been more widely used during pregnancy in other countries and no safety concerns have been identified.

If you've already had the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine for your 1st dose and did not have any serious side effects, you should have it again for your 2nd dose.

You can book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/). If you're under 40, you'll only be shown appointments for the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. If you're 40 or over, you'll be asked if you're pregnant to make sure you're only shown appointments for these vaccines.

At your appointment, you'll be able to discuss the benefits and potential risks of having a COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy. This is so you can make an informed decision about having it. You can also speak to a GP or your maternity team for advice.

There's no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on your chances of becoming pregnant. There's no need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

Find out more:

- GOV.UK: COVID-19 vaccine advice if you're pregnant, may get pregnant or are breastfeeding (Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding)
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and Royal College of Midwives: COVID-19 vaccines and fertility (Link: https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/RCOG-and-RCM-respond-to-misinformation-around-Covid-19-vaccine-and-fertility/)

- RCOG: COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy decision aid (PDF, 643kb) (Link: https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/2021-02-24-combined-info-sheet-and-decision-aid.pdf)
- pregnancy and COVID-19 (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/)

COVID-19 vaccine ingredients

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

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine contains a tiny amount of alcohol, but this is less than in some everyday foods like bread.

The vaccines are suitable for people of all faiths.

Vaccination in other parts of the UK

- NHS Inform: COVID-19 vaccination in Scotland (Link: https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine)
- Public Health Wales: COVID-19 vaccination in Wales (Link: https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information/)
- nidirect: COVID-19 vaccination in Northern Ireland (Link: https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/get-covid-19-vaccination-northern-ireland)

More in Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/)

COVID-19 vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines safety and side effects (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/safety-and-side-effects/)

Who can get vaccinated (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/who-can-get-the-vaccine/)

How you will be contacted (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/how-you-will-be-contacted/)

What happens at your appointment (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/what-happens-at-your-appointment/)

Health conditions and COVID-19 vaccination (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/health-conditions/)

Vaccination status for travelling abroad (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/vaccination-status-for-travelling-abroad/)