

The COVID-19 vaccine

what you need to know

Why should I get the vaccine?

- The COVID-19 vaccine has prevented up to 98,700 deaths in England and kept over 82,100 people out of hospital
- The vaccine reduces the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 which can affect people of any age
- Vaccination reduces the likelihood of you developing Long COVID. COVID-19 can result in Long COVID, even if you only have mild symptoms. People of all ages have experienced Long COVID and it can make you very ill over a long period
- Over 41 million people in the UK have had both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, protecting them and their loved ones.

Will I experience side effects to the vaccine?

- Some people do experience side effects
- The common side effects related to the vaccine are mild (e.g. sore arm, headache or mild fever)
- The risk of developing a severe reaction following vaccination (e.g. developing a blood clot) is incredibly rare. The risk of developing a blood clot from the AstraZeneca vaccine is extremely low. It is lower than the risk of developing a blood clot if you get COVID-19.

The risk is slightly higher in those under 40. This is one of the reasons why under 40s are offered an alternative vaccine.

- The vaccines were tested on tens of thousands of people during trials, and have now been received by millions of people worldwide.

By being vaccinated, you are protecting yourself AND protecting more vulnerable members of your family and community. This includes family and friends who may be older adults or have underlying health conditions.

Who should get the vaccine?

Everyone that is eligible should get the vaccine. The only people who are advised not to are those who have a severe allergy to a listed ingredient in a vaccine. If this is the case you should take another one of the COVID-19 vaccines, to which you are not allergic.

Pregnancy – research in the USA has confirmed it is safe for pregnant women to get the vaccine. Pregnant women are recommended either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

Fertility – there is no evidence that the vaccine affects fertility.

Breastfeeding – it is safe to get your vaccine if you are breastfeeding.

Who is eligible for the vaccine?

All adults (18+) in the UK are now eligible to have the vaccine. This includes recent migrants, those on temporary visas and those living here without permission/documents. You do not need to pay for a vaccine, have an NHS number or be registered with a GP practice to get a vaccine. If you are not registered with a GP practice, you can ring up a local practice and request to be vaccinated as an unregistered patient. Or you can attend a vaccine walk-in clinic.

Some children are now eligible. You can find out which children can be vaccinated, and how at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine).

How can I get the vaccine?

You can book your vaccine at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine or by ringing **119**, free of charge. You can also attend a walk-in clinic in the local area, which you don't need to book. Find out more at: selondonccg.nhs.uk/popupclinics.

I've already had COVID-19 – do I need the vaccine?

Yes. It is unclear how long and strong the immunity is if you've had COVID-19. The vaccine provides a more reliable amount of protection, particularly after two doses. There are guidelines about how long after your COVID-19 infection you should have the vaccine – 28 days is advised.

How were they developed so quickly?

- Governments around the world paid money for the research in advance
- Thousands of people volunteered to be part of the trials

- Manufacturing and production negotiations were quicker because it was a state of emergency
- Global scientific collaboration was far greater than usual
- Our knowledge about vaccine technology is much better now than it was previously.

The vaccines were not developed by cutting corners.

Will the vaccines work on new variants?

All viruses mutate and develop new strains. The vaccines are effective at reducing risk of severe illness and death in the Alpha, Beta and Delta variants. It is uncertain how effective they will be against future variants. Evidence indicates that the vaccines will likely still protect against severe illness and death in future variants. With all variants, two doses provides more protection than one dose.

Are they halal / kosher / approved by Christian leaders / contain animal products?

- The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board have said they are halal.
- The Conference of European Rabbis urges those of Jewish faith to take up the vaccine.
- The Pope and the Vatican recommends people take up the vaccine.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury (CofE) recommends people take up the vaccine.
- None of the UK-licensed COVID-19 vaccines contain animal products.

**For more information about the vaccine go to:
www.nhsvaccinefacts.com**