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In association with



BritishRedCross



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) VACCINATION

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

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

Version 1 (Updated on 03.03.2021)

ENGLISH | ENGLISH



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WHO CAN GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

COVID-19 vaccines offered by the NHS will be freely available to all adults in England, Scotland and Wales, regardless immigration status. This includes people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The NHS is currently offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus.

The vaccines are being offered in some pharmacies, at local vaccination centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres.

The NHS will vaccinate people in order of clinical risk, largely based on existing medical conditions and age groups from old to young. Some people are much more at risk than others of serious complications from COVID-19.

It's being given to:

- people aged 55 and over
- people who are at high risk from coronavirus (those with long term health conditions)
- people who are at greater risk of complications from coronavirus due to existing medical problems (such as COPD, asthma, heart problems, kidney or liver disease, diabetes and other long term health problems)
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people with learning disabilities
- people who are eligible for Carer's Allowance

The UK government aims offer all adults their first dose of a vaccine by the end of July.

England: [Read the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination for older adults](#)

Scotland: [Read the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination for adults](#)

Wales: [Read the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination](#)

If you are not eligible yet

Wait to be contacted. The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine.

England: [Read the latest Information about COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and vaccine supplies](#)

Is the vaccine suitable for everyone?

There's no evidence the COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe if you're pregnant. But more evidence is needed before you can routinely be offered it.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has updated its advice to recommend you may consider having the vaccine if you're pregnant and:

- at high risk of getting coronavirus because of where you work
- have a health condition that means you're at high risk of serious complications of coronavirus

You do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination. The vaccines do not contain any live virus and cannot give you or your baby COVID-19. There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility.

You can have the COVID-19 vaccine if you're breastfeeding. Speak to a healthcare professional before you have the vaccination. They will discuss the benefits and risks with you.

England: [Read the latest COVID-19 vaccine advice if you're pregnant, may get pregnant or are breastfeeding](#)

Scotland: [Read the latest COVID-19 vaccine advice if you're pregnant, may get pregnant or are breastfeeding](#)

Wales: [Read the latest COVID-19 vaccine advice if you're pregnant, may get pregnant or are breastfeeding](#)

You should not have the COVID-19 vaccine if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction (including anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the same vaccine or any of the ingredients in the vaccine.

People who have immunosuppression and HIV infection (regardless of CD4 count) should be given the vaccine.

People with blood clotting or bleeding disorders can still receive the vaccine but may need to consult with their care provider to make sure it is given at the right time during treatment.

HOW THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS GIVEN

The COVID-19 vaccines are all given as an injection into your upper arm. They're given as two doses. You will have the second dose three to 12 weeks after having the first dose.

When you receive your first vaccine you will be given a small card with the vaccine details on it. You should keep this card safe. If you have to take your second vaccine dose at a different vaccination centre the card will make sure you receive the right type of vaccine.

HOW TO GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE

COVID-19 vaccines offered by the NHS will be freely available to all adults in the UK, regardless of immigration status.

It is easier to get the vaccine if you are registered with a General Practitioner (GP). This will ensure you have an NHS number and can book a vaccination appointment when you become eligible (based on age or clinical condition). Registering with a GP means that you can access other health and care services too.

A GP is a family medical doctor. In [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#), everyone can register with a GP and receive primary care services free of charge, regardless of immigration status.

If you are not currently registered with a GP you should find a local GP and get registered now, even if you are not eligible for the vaccine yet. You can find a GP near where you live using the NHS website for [England](#), [Scotland](#) or [Wales](#), or you can telephone your local GP and ask to be registered as a patient.

GP surgeries can only register people who live in their local area. If you live outside of the GP surgery's boundary you will need to find another GP closer to where you live.

You will need to fill in a form to register with a GP. You can check the GP surgery website to see if you can register online. You should ask to register as a permanent patient (not a temporary patient). You can ask the GP surgery for help filling in the form if you need it.

Do I need documents to register with a GP?

Some surgeries may ask you to provide documents, such as proof of address, proof of identity or proof of immigration status, or an NHS number in order to register, but they should not refuse to register you if you can't provide them.

If you can't provide these documents, you should say that you don't have these documents but that you do live within the practice boundary and would like to register with the GP as a patient.

If you experience problems when registering with a GP, the following resources may help you. If you are registering online and are asked for documents, you could email the resources to the GP surgery:

- [NHS England](#) has produced [yellow cards to help people without documents to register with a GP in England](#). You could show the card to the GP receptionist when you go to register. You can get a yellow card from local charities, foodbanks, your local Healthwatch or from Doctors of the World.
- [The Scottish Government](#) has issued [guidance to GPs in Scotland](#) stating: "No documents are required to register with a GP. The inability by a patient to provide identification or proof of address is not considered reasonable grounds to refuse or delay registering a patient."

- The British Medical Association's [guidance for doctors in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland](#) states "If a patient is not able to provide identity documents, it is not reasonable grounds to refuse to register them".

If a GP practice has refused to register you, patients in England can call 0300 311 2233. Patients in [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) should contact your local Health Board. Patients can also contact Doctors of the World on 0808 1647 686 (free phone number) for help registering with a GP.

If you are homeless

You can register with a GP if you do not have a fixed address. You should explain to the GP practice that you don't have a fixed address but that you are staying in the local area and would like to register as a patient. You could use a temporary address, which may be a friend's address or a day centre, or the practice can register you without an address.

You should make sure the GP has a way of contacting you by telephone if they need to (for example, with test results).

If you are staying in accommodation for asylum seekers

If you are an asylum seeker staying in Home Office accommodation or contingency accommodation, such as a hotel, you should use the address of this accommodation when registering with a GP and say that you don't have proof of address documents because you are in asylum accommodation provided by the Home Office. If a GP refuses to register you, you should speak to your accommodation provider or Migrant Help on 0808 8010 503 (free phone number).

If you find out the Home Office is going to move you to new accommodation, you should not delay taking the COVID-19 vaccine until you have been moved. You can receive your second dose of the vaccine at a vaccination centre near to your new accommodation.

You should look after the small card you are given at your first vaccination appointment and take it to your second appointment so that the vaccination centre can make sure you receive the right type of vaccine.

Booking a vaccination appointment

England

You can book your vaccination appointments online if any of the following apply:

- people aged 55 and over
- people who are at [high risk from coronavirus](#) (those with long term health conditions)
- people who are at greater risk of complications from coronavirus due to existing medical problems (such as COPD, asthma, heart problems, kidney or liver disease, diabetes and other long term health problems)
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people with learning disabilities
- people who are eligible for [Carer's Allowance](#)

You can book appointments at a larger vaccination centre or a pharmacy that provides COVID-19 vaccinations. You do not need to wait to be contacted by the NHS.

[You can book your COVID-19 vaccination appointment online.](#)

Scotland

You will receive an invitation letter or phone call with your appointment details. If you are going to attend the appointment, you do not need to do anything to confirm that you're going to the appointment. You can [reschedule or cancel your appointment](#) if you cannot attend so your appointment can be given to someone else.

Wales

When it is your turn to receive the vaccine, you will be contacted directly by the NHS. You may be contacted by either telephone or letter.

Will I be reported to the Home Office if I receive the vaccine?

Your information will not be shared with the Home Office immigration department when you access an NHS service that is free for everyone, regardless of immigration status. This includes GP services and COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccination services.

You should not be asked to prove your immigration status when registering with a GP or booking a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

Some NHS hospital and community services not related to testing, treatment or vaccination for coronavirus are not free for people without regular immigration status. These services may share information about you, such as name, address and date of birth, with the Home Office immigration department. This is to confirm your current immigration status or to report unpaid healthcare charges. Information about your health will not be shared.

In circumstances where there are safety concerns for individuals or the public, NHS services may be required to share patient information with the police, the courts and government departments.

HOW SAFE ARE THE COVID-19 VACCINES?

The vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The MHRA follows international standards of safety.

All of the vaccines have been tested on between 15,000 to 50,000 people across the world. They are tested on both men and women, on people from different ethnic backgrounds, and of all ages between 18-84. Studies will continue even during the

vaccine rollout to look at how effective they are at preventing infection or carrying the virus that may be passed on to others, and to expand their use for children.

So far, millions of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long term complications have been reported.

To find out more about the vaccines approved in the UK, see:

- [GOV.UK: Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for COVID-19 approved by MHRA \(English only\)](#)
- [GOV.UK: Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19 approved by MHRA \(English only\)](#)
- [GOV.UK: Moderna vaccine for COVID-19 approved by MHRA \(English only\)](#)

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

The first dose of any of the COVID-19 vaccines should give you good protection from coronavirus. But you need to have the two doses of the vaccine to give you longer lasting protection. There is a chance you might still get or spread coronavirus even if you have the vaccine. This means it is important to:

- continue to follow [social distancing guidance](#)
- if you can, wear something that covers your nose and mouth in places where it's hard to stay away from other people

COVID-19 VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS

Most side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are mild and should not last longer than 2-3 days, such as:

- a sore arm where the needle went in
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy
- feeling or being sick
- a temperature or fever

You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, if you need to.

If you have a high temperature that lasts more than 48 hours you may have coronavirus or another infection. Cough and loss of smell or taste are not a side effect of the vaccine so if you develop these symptoms you should organise a test for coronavirus by [going online](#).

If your symptoms get worse, last for more than 48 hours or you are worried, call your GP between 8am and 6.30pm or 111 at other times (this is a free number to call). You can get an interpreter in your language by repeatedly answering “**yes**” to all questions.

Allergic reactions

Tell healthcare staff before you are vaccinated if you've ever had a serious allergic reaction. You should not have the COVID-19 vaccine if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction (including anaphylaxis) to:

- a previous dose of the same vaccine
- any of the ingredients in the vaccine

Serious allergic reactions are rare. If you do have a reaction to the vaccine, it usually happens in minutes. Staff and volunteers at the vaccination centres are trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately.

You can report any suspected side effect using the [Coronavirus Yellow Card safety scheme](#).

COVID-19 VACCINE INGREDIENTS

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

The British Islamic Medical Council [recommends that the vaccine can be taken](#). The Catholic Church has said [the use of COVID-19 vaccines is morally acceptable](#).

MORE INFORMATION

Doctors of the World: [clinic and translated COVID-19 information](#)

British Red Cross: [COVID-19 vaccines: what you need to know](#)

NHS England: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine](#)

NHS Inform: [The coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine](#)

Public Health Wales: [COVID-19 vaccine information](#)