

## FAQs: Over 80s COVID-19 vaccinations

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### About vaccine/safety

#### Can I get Coronavirus from the vaccine?

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 most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in your normal sense of taste or smell

If you have the symptoms above, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

If you need more information on symptoms visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

#### I have had the flu vaccine, do I need the COVID-19 vaccine as well?

The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. As you are eligible for both vaccines you should have them both, but normally separated by at least a week.

#### Will the vaccine protect me?

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. It may take a few weeks for your body to build up protection from the vaccine.

The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

#### Can I have the vaccine if I'm immunocompromised?

The vaccines do not contain living organisms, and so are safe for people with disorders of the immune system. These people may not respond so well to the vaccine.

You should talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given the vaccine if you have a weakened immune system.

#### How long will the vaccination appointment take?

We anticipate that the vaccination process, including giving your consent, will take no more than 15 minutes, and if you have driven yourself to your appointment you will be asked to wait for a further 15 minutes on site after you have had your vaccination.

#### I've been told I can't get the vaccine right now because of [PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES/PRE-EXISTING HEALTH CONDITION]. Why am I being excluded?

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We are not excluding people from the vaccination programme. We are working hard to fill the first vaccination appointments at our hospital hubs. It is important that you are vaccinated in the most appropriate location for your needs, which is why we are focusing on particular groups of individuals for whom we believe these appointments at the hubs would be most suitable. We are planning to offer more suitable appointments, including appointments outside the hospital environment, to eligible groups of people over the coming weeks.

### **I am in one of the priority groups. Why do I have to wait?**

The COVID-19 vaccines will become available as they are approved for use and as each batch is manufactured. So every dose is needed to protect those at highest risk. You will be called in as soon as there is enough vaccine available.

Some people who are housebound or live in a care home and who can't get to a local vaccination centre may have to wait for supply of the right type of vaccine. This is because only some vaccines can be transported between people's homes.

### **Does the vaccine contain animal products?**

The vaccine does not include animal products and has been classed as vegan.

### **Can I have the vaccination if I have had allergic reactions to other things before?**

As is common with new vaccines the MHRA have advised on a precautionary basis that people with a significant history of allergic reactions do not receive this vaccination at this moment in time.

## **Attending the vaccine appointment**

### **I need help to get to my appointment – can you help?**

Your Local Authority has a team of volunteer drivers to help you get to your appointment. You can call them between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday on 0345 045 5219 to book your transport. We would ask that you consider contacting a friend or relative who may be able to drive you to the appointment if you think they may be able to help in the first instance, as our volunteer driver team will have limited capacity.

### **Can I bring someone to support me at my appointment?**

We are asking patients to come to their appointment on their own unless they are in a wheelchair, but friends or relatives are more than welcome to wait in the car park if they have driven together. We would recommend only travelling or asking for support from someone within your household or support bubble in line with current COVID-19 guidance.

If you need assistance from a carer or relative to walk to and through the vaccination centre, they are also welcome to accompany you wearing a face covering.

### **Why are you only vaccinating in Cambridge and Peterborough?**

- **Why are you not vaccinating in my area?**
- **Will you pay for my transport?**
- Sorry, but we cannot cover any transportation costs.
- **When can my GP vaccinate me instead?**
- Vaccines will be offered in a range of settings. Some vaccination teams will visit people to offer the vaccine, for example in care homes, other people may have to go to the nearest

centre. Because some of the vaccine has to be stored in a very low temperature freezer, you may not be able to get the vaccine in your normal GP surgery.

The Hospital Vaccination Hubs are the first two vaccination locations in our areas, with plans underway to open other sites over the coming weeks. These are the first sites to open and your first opportunity to get your vaccination.

### **Is the vaccine safe?**

The vaccine has met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Other vaccines are being developed. They will only be available on the NHS once they have been thoroughly tested to make sure they are safe and effective.

So far, thousands of people have been given a coronavirus vaccine and no serious side effects or complications have been reported.

### **Is it safe to go into hospital to get the vaccine?**

It is safe to come to your local hospital. The vaccinations are taking place in a green zone/ non-clinical/ separate area of the hospital, and strict Infection Prevention and Control procedures are in place.

### **If I say no to this appointment, when can I get another slot?**

We can look for other dates on the phone now, or further appointments will be available at other locations soon.

### **I don't want to go to a hospital site, can I wait until my GP can vaccinate me?**

Please try to attend the vaccination centre you are offered. If you cannot attend that centre, you may have to wait to get the vaccine in a more convenient location.

### **What if I get stuck in traffic?**

Please contact 01733 677559 to notify them.

### **Can I park there?**

Yes, there is free parking available on site in carpark E, opposite the entrance to the vaccination centre.

### **Do I have to wear PPE/ face mask?**

You should wear a face covering when you attend your vaccination appointment. Staff on site will also be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Please remember to use hand sanitiser provided on site.

- **What if I am exempt from wearing a mask?**

If you are unable to wear a face mask, we would ask you bring and wear a face visor instead.

### **I'm housebound – can you come to me instead?**

Due to the nature of the vaccine, the first appointments are being offered via Hospital Hubs. We do have plans in place to support the vaccination of people who are housebound when we are able to.

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### **I have mobility issues – can I get assistance from a porter?**

Sadly, we are unable to offer the support of a porter for these first appointments. We have plans in place to support the vaccination of people for whom the hospital hub is not the best option. Alternatively, a carer or relative can accompany you.

### **Is this a scam? How do I know you're really calling from the NHS?**

You should have received a text message from your local GP Practice letting you know we would be calling.

### **Can you book my husband/ wife/partner in now too?**

Not at this moment in time. We are calling patients individually to book them in.

When it is the right time people will receive an invitation to come forward. For most people this will be in the form of a letter either from their GP or the national booking system; this will include all the information they need, including their NHS number.

We know lots of people will be eager to get protected but we are asking people not to contact the NHS to get an appointment until they get their letter.

### **Can you book my carer in?**

When it is the right time people will receive an invitation to come forward. For most people this will be in the form of a letter either from their GP or the national booking system; this will include all the information they need, including their NHS number.

We know lots of people will be eager to get protected but we are asking people not to contact the NHS to get an appointment until they get their letter.

### **Who will give me the vaccine?**

An appropriately trained member of NHS staff will deliver your vaccination. Each member of staff has received specific COVID-19 vaccination training in advance of delivering the vaccines.

### **How will the vaccine be administered?**

COVID-19 vaccines are administered with an injection needle into the upper arm.

You will need to receive two doses of the vaccine, at least 21 days apart, in order to be protected.

### **What happens afterwards, do I have to sit and wait?**

You will be given important information on how to look after yourself after the vaccination has taken place. While a member of staff is sharing this information with you, they will pay attention to how you are feeling to ensure that you are not experiencing any immediate reaction from the vaccine.

We ask that you wait for 15 minutes in the vaccination hub area before leaving.

### **What happens if I do not feel well on the day of my vaccine?**

You do not have to cancel or postpone your vaccine if you are suffering with a minor illness, such as a cold. If you are feeling very unwell, the vaccine may be postponed.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, including a persistent cough, high temperature and/ or loss of taste of smell please contact us to rearrange your appointment and visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> to book a test.

### **Will a translator or BSL interpreter be available?**

I'm afraid we will not have translators or BSL interpreters available for these first appointments. Further appointments will be available at other locations soon, which may be able to offer further support.

### **What do I have to bring to my vaccination appointment?**

We are asking people to bring their own face covering, mask or visor to the vaccination appointment, and to wear it when they are inside the building. You will also need to bring a form of identification to the appointment which includes your date of birth and address.

## **Post vaccine**

### **What side effects can I expect?**

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you still need to have the second dose. Although you may get some protection from the first dose, having the second dose will give you the best protection against the virus.

Very common side effects include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection. This tends to be worst around 1-2 days after the vaccine
- feeling tired
- headaches
- general aches, or mild flu like symptoms

Although feeling feverish is not uncommon for two to three days, a high temperature is unusual and may indicate you have COVID-19 or another infection. You can rest and take the normal dose of paracetamol (follow the advice in the packaging) to help you feel better.

Symptoms following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, call NHS 111.

### **What happens if I feel unwell after the vaccine?**

Symptoms following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, call NHS 111.

If you do seek advice from a doctor or nurse, make sure you tell them about your vaccination (show them the vaccination card if possible) so that they can assess you properly.

You can also report suspected side effects to vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme. You can do this via <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>.

### **When will I receive the appointment for the second dose?**

We will book you in now.

It is important to have both doses of the same vaccine to give you the best protection.

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### **Once I'm vaccinated, can I see my grandchildren/my children like I would have before the pandemic?**

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection, and two doses will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill. We do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus. So, it is important to follow the guidance in your local area to protect those around you.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- practise social distancing
- wear a face mask
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- follow the current guidance – you can find this via [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

### **Will I be completely immune after getting the vaccine?**

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. It may take a few weeks for your body to build up protection from the vaccine.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

### **I've already been part of the vaccine trial process – do I need another vaccination?**

If you are already part of a vaccine trial, please contact the study team by calling them on the number you have been provided with as part of the trial.