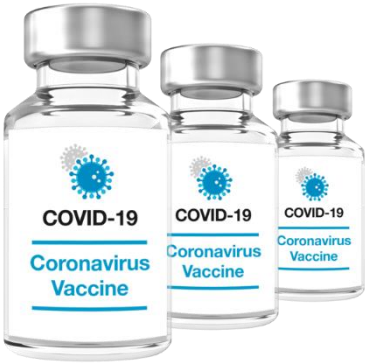
Coronavirus Vaccine Q&A

This document has some of the most commonly asked questions and answers about the coronavirus vaccine.



How does a vaccine work?

A vaccine is medicine that helps your body to fight an infection in the future.

A vaccine works by teaching your body's **immune system** how to fight the infection.

Your **immune system** is how your body fights off infections, like a cold or the flu.

Your immune system learns how to fight the coronavirus infection without you getting poorly.

If you catch coronavirus in the future, the vaccine should stop you from becoming very unwell.

Scientists say that it looks like the coronavirus vaccine may also help stop people spreading the virus.

How is the coronavirus vaccine given?

The coronavirus vaccine is given as an injection into your upper arm.

It is given as 2 doses.

mencap

Easy read

Will a vaccine stop me getting coronavirus?

No. The vaccine won't stop you getting coronavirus. It will help your body to fight coronavirus without getting poorly.

Do I have to have the vaccine?

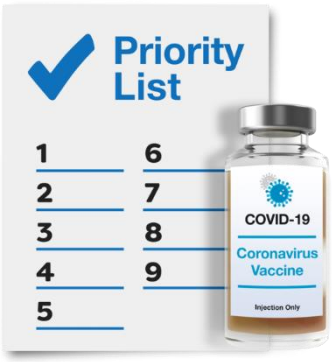
You can choose if you want to have the vaccine or not.

If you are not able to make the decision for yourself, other people will help you to decide if you should have the vaccine.

This might be a support worker, doctor or family member.

If I want to have the vaccine, when will I have it?

The Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) have decided who should get the vaccine first.



They have put people in priority groups of who needs to have the vaccine first.

The people who are most at risk of getting unwell and dying from coronavirus will be offered the vaccine first.

At the moment, people will be offered the vaccine in this order:

- People who live in care homes for older people and the staff who work there

- People who are 80 years of age and over, and health and social care staff who support people

- People who are 75 years of age and over

- People who are 70 years of age and over, and people who are **clinically extremely vulnerable** (this includes adults with **Downs Syndrome**)

Easy read

- People who are 65 years of age and over.

- People who are 16 years to 64 years with **underlying health conditions** which put them at higher risk of getting very poorly if they caught coronavirus.

- People who are 60 years of age and over.

- People who are 55 years of age and over.

- People who are 50 years of age and over

Easy read

Adults with Downs Syndrome are in the **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable** group.

This is because people with Downs Syndrome are more likely to get very poorly if they get coronavirus.

People with **severe and profound learning disabilities** are in the group for people who are 16 years to 64 years old and have **underlying health conditions**.

Anyone who is a **'main carer'** for someone with a disability is also in this group.

Easy read

When will I know it is my turn to be offered the vaccine?

You will be contacted by the NHS when it is your turn to be offered the vaccine.

You will be contacted by letter, email or phone call.

How many injections will I need?

You will need to have 2 injections. When you have the first injection, you will be told when to come back for the 2nd injection.

Are there any side effects?

All medicines can have side effects. Some people might feel poorly after their injection.

After your injection, you will be asked to wait for 15 minutes in case you have any side effects.

You will be given information about the vaccine you have had, how to look for side effects and what to do if they happen.

What should I do if I have allergies?

It is important that you tell the person doing the vaccination if you have any allergies.

If you have had **anaphylaxis** from a vaccine, medicine or food in the past, you should not have the Pfizer vaccine.

Anaphylaxis is when your body goes into shock because you are allergic to something.

You must tell the healthcare professionals doing the vaccination if you have allergies.

Should I still have the vaccine if I have had coronavirus?

Yes.

Are there any other ways to have the vaccine if you don't like injections?

No, the only way to have the vaccine is by having an injection.

Can you choose which vaccine to have?

No.

What do I need to do after I have had the vaccine?

You will still need to socially distance and keep on washing your hands.

You will still need to wear a face covering if you are not exempt from wearing one.

How has a vaccine been produced so quickly?

A vaccine is tested in 3 stages of **trials**. A trial is when you try something out to see how well it works.

Stage 1: trials on a small group of people to make sure the vaccine is safe to use and to work out how much of the vaccine you need to get the best results.

Stage 2: trials on a larger group of people to check the vaccine works on more people and gives them enough protection against the virus.

Stage 3: trials on thousands of people for scientists to see if the vaccine protects people enough to stop them getting the virus.

The 3 stages are usually done one after the other. For the coronavirus vaccine, stages 2 and 3 took place at the same time.

The results were looked at as the trials were taking place, rather than waiting until the trials had finished.

How do I know the vaccine is safe?

The Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) makes sure that vaccines work well and are safe to use.

All vaccines in the UK have been checked by the MHRA which means that they are as safe as possible to use.

This information was made with thanks to Photosymbols.