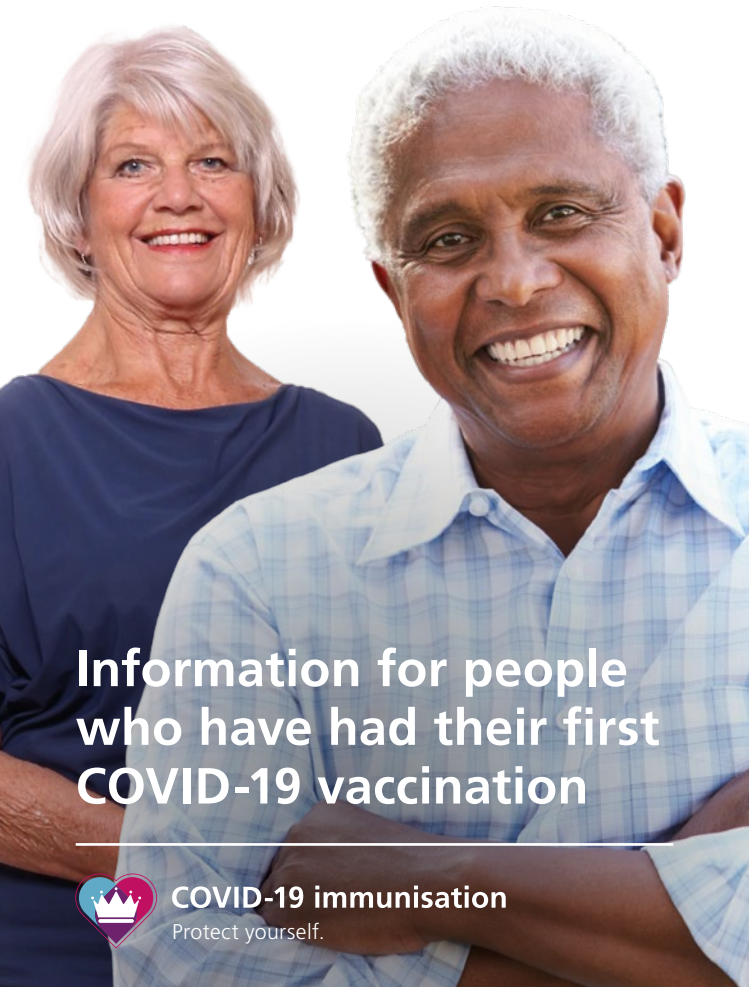
Public Health England

NHS

COVID-19 vaccination

What to expect



Information for people who have had their first COVID-19 vaccination

COVID-19 immunisation

Protect yourself.

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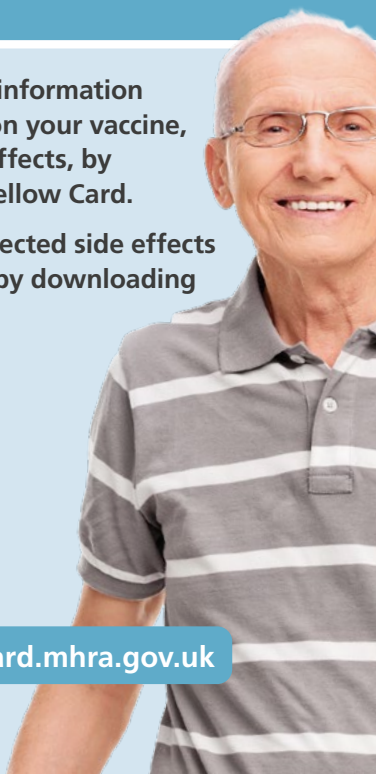
Please read the product information leaflet for more details on your vaccine, including possible side effects, by searching Coronavirus Yellow Card.

You can also report suspected side effects on the same website or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk



People who are most at risk from the complications of COVID-19 are being offered the COVID-19 vaccination first.

The vaccine you are being offered is amongst the first to be approved as safe and effective by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

You have just received your first dose and now should plan to attend your next appointment. This leaflet is a guide to what to do now.

> In the UK, there are two types of COVID-19 vaccine to be used once they are approved. They both require two doses to provide the best protection. Both have been shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials.

An independent group of experts has recommended that the NHS offers these vaccines to those at highest risk of catching the infection and suffering serious complications if they do catch the infection.

This includes older adults in care homes and frontline health and social care workers. When more vaccine becomes available, the vaccines will be offered to other people at risk as soon as possible.

What are the side effects?

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
- headache
- 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 (see advice on page 5). An uncommon side effect is swelling of the glands. You can rest and take the normal dose of paracetamol (follow the advice in the packaging) to help make you feel better.

These symptoms 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) so that

they can assess you properly. You can also report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme.

You can do this online by searching Coronavirus Yellow Card or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

Can I catch COVID-19 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 (anosmia).

Although a mild fever can occur within a day or two of vaccination, if you have any other COVID symptoms or your fever lasts longer, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

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

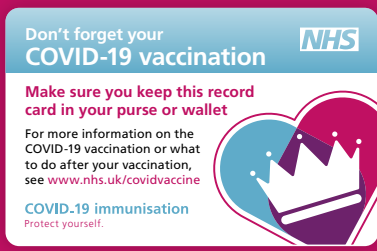
Can I go back to normal activities after having my vaccine?

Yes, you should be able to resume activities that are normal for you as long as you feel well. If your arm is particularly sore, you may find heavy lifting difficult. If you feel unwell or very tired you should rest and avoid operating machinery or driving.

What do I do next?

Plan to attend your second appointment. You should have a record card and your next appointment should be between 3 and 12 weeks later. It is important to have both doses of the same vaccine to give you the best protection.

Keep your card safe and make sure you keep your next appointment to get your second dose.



What should I do if I am not well when it is my next appointment?

If you are unwell, it is better to wait until you have recovered to have your vaccine, but you should try to have it as soon as possible. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating, waiting for a COVID-19 test or unsure if you are fit and well.

Will the vaccine protect me?

The COVID-19 vaccine that you have had has been shown to reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. Each vaccine has been tested in more than 20,000 people in several different countries and shown to be safe.

It may take a week or two for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

Can I give COVID-19 to anyone, now I have had the vaccine?

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection, and a full course 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, but we do expect it to reduce this risk. So, it is still 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:

- practice social distancing
- wear a face mask
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- follow the current guidance at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Remember

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

Vaccination, helping to protect those most vulnerable.

If you need more information on the COVID-19 vaccination please visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/

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