

Key messages update

Information also here: [The NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme :: North West London Clinical Commissioning Groups \(nwlondonccgs.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nwlondonccgs.nhs.uk)

18/12/20

This week, the NHS in NW London started to deliver the Covid-19 vaccine, in line with the government's priority list of which people will get it first.

This is a very exciting development and we want to be clear about how it will work for local people. **The NHS will get in touch with you directly when it is your turn to be vaccinated.**

Please don't contact your doctor or the NHS asking about vaccination; this is not a service that you are able to book in advance. The NHS will contact you when your turn comes in the months ahead. If you are contacted, please do attend the appointment.

We would encourage those over 80 and in the government's priority list to be ready to accept their invite when called by their GP, reading the covid19 vaccination guide for adults leaflet is a good way to prepare – [you can find this leaflet here](#). You can also hear local GP Genevieve Small [talk about her experience](#) of having the vaccine.

It will take time to vaccinate everyone in this first group. The phased vaccine supply means the bulk of vaccinations for high risk groups will inevitably take place between January and April – so please be aware you may not be called until then.

In the meantime, it is vitally important that we all continue to follow the national public health guidance: wash your hands regularly, wear a face covering in enclosed spaces and maintain safe social distancing. Covid-19 is still very prevalent and highly infectious: the risk of catching it is the same as ever for people who have not been vaccinated.”

Some more frequently asked questions can be found here.

How will this week's new Local Vaccination Services work?

Nurses, paramedics, pharmacists and other NHS staff will work alongside GPs to vaccinate those aged 80 and over, as well as care home workers and residents, identified as priority groups for the life-saving vaccine.

Along with other countries in the UK, residents of care homes in England will also receive their first vaccine this week after distributors finalise new, stringent processes to ensure safe delivery of the PfizerBioNTech vaccine.

Like hospital staff, who launched the world-leading campaign last week, practice teams are working rapidly to redesign their sites and put in place safe processes to meet the tough logistical challenges of offering the vaccination.

The NHS will contact people in the priority groups when it is their turn to receive the vaccine.

Who will get the vaccine first?

Phased vaccine supply means the bulk of vaccination for high risk groups will inevitably take place between January and April. So great vigilance is required before then to prevent a third wave of Covid.

Patients aged 80 and above who are already attending hospital as an outpatient, and those who are being discharged home after a hospital stay, will be among the first to receive the life-saving jab. Hospitals have already begun inviting over 80s in for a jab and working with care home providers to book their staff in to vaccination clinics.

All of those people vaccinated will need a booster jab 21 days later.

When will NHS and social care staff be vaccinated?

The JCVI have put patient-facing health and social care staff into the top two priority groups because of their heightened risk of exposure to the virus. So, any appointments not used for the initial groups will be used for healthcare workers who are at highest risk of serious illness from Covid-19.

How will people know when it is their time to get the vaccine?

When it is the right time people will receive an invitation to come forward. For most people this will be a letter, either from their GP or the national NHS. This letter will include all the information a person will need to book appointments, including your NHS number. We are asking the public not to contact the NHS to get an appointment until you get this letter. We would be grateful if you would help us to share this message over the coming weeks

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine

The NHS is currently offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus.

At this time, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals to:

- some people aged 80 and over who already have a hospital appointment in the next few weeks
- people who work in care homes
- health care workers at high risk

The vaccine will be offered more widely, and at other locations, as soon as possible.

The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

[Read the latest JCVI advice on priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccination on GOV.UK](#)

Wait to be contacted

The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.

Advice if you're of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding

You should wait to have the COVID-19 vaccine:

- if you're pregnant – you should wait until you've had your baby
- if you're breastfeeding – you should wait until you've stopped breastfeeding

If you're trying to get pregnant, you should wait for 2 months after having the 2nd dose before getting pregnant.

There's no evidence it's unsafe if you're pregnant or breastfeeding. But more evidence is needed before you can be offered the vaccine.

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

How the COVID-19 vaccine is given

The COVID-19 vaccine is given as an injection into your upper arm. It's given as 2 doses, at least 21 days apart.

How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccine approved for use in the UK was developed by Pfizer/BioNTech. It has 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 UK has some of the highest safety standards in the world.

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 COVID-19 vaccine and no serious side effects or complications have been reported.

[Read about the approved Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for COVID-19 by MHRA on GOV.UK](#)

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?

After having both doses of the vaccine most people will be protected against coronavirus.

It takes a few weeks after getting the 2nd dose for it to work.

There is a small chance you might still get 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

Read more about [why vaccines are safe and important](#), including how they work and what they contain.

COVID-19 vaccine side effects

Most side effects are mild and should not last longer than a week, such as:

- a sore arm where the needle went in
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy

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

If you have a high temperature you may have coronavirus or another infection.

If your symptoms get worse or you are worried, call 111.

It's very rare for anyone to have a serious reaction to the vaccine (anaphylaxis). If this does happen, it usually happens within minutes.

Staff giving the vaccine are trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately.

You can report any suspected side effect using the Yellow Card safety scheme.

[Visit Yellow Card for further information.](#)

COVID-19 vaccine ingredients

The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain any animal products or egg.

Myth busting

<i>The vaccine contains microchips</i>	<i>The vaccine only has what it needs to produce the fighting cells and thing to make it safe, able to be delivered and able to be stored. There are no microchips in the vaccine.</i>
<i>The vaccine alters your DNA</i>	<i>The vaccine only gets you to produce an immune response – the virus fighters – it does not alter your DNA</i>
<i>The vaccine gives you Covid</i>	<i>Vaccines are developed by taking parts of the virus itself. However, the parts of the virus in the vaccine cannot reproduce in your body and cannot give you COVID-19.</i>

<i>The vaccine trials were only tested in Africa</i>	<i>The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine trials were in the United States, Europe, Turkey, South Africa, and South America. The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine trials were in the UK, Brazil and South Africa.</i>
<i>Care homes are being used as Guinea pigs</i>	<i>Care home residents and staff are high priority to receive the vaccine due to the risk they have of COVID-19</i>