



COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FAQ

16 FEBRUARY 2021

When will I receive my COVID vaccination?

Please wait to be contacted to receive your vaccination. Residents and customers will be contacted by the GP.

For colleagues, the Trust's intention to make the vaccination available to everyone who is eligible (for example, if you work in a care home or are a health and social care worker who is at high risk). In any case, please wait to be contacted by either the Trust or your GP.

Frontline workers (i.e. those who come into contact regularly with residents/customers) are eligible for the vaccine as one of the priority groups defined by the Government. From 11 February, for an initial period of two weeks, all eligible frontline care workers can access their first vaccination via the National Booking Service. You can book by phoning 119 or online: nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/

Colleagues who are shielding should wait to be contacted by their GP or the NHS about their vaccine.

How safe is the vaccine?

All vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness and must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks before being issued. We are very lucky that thousands of people in the UK and hundreds of our colleagues and residents at the Trust have been given a COVID-19 vaccine already.

Reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare and no long-term complications have been reported.

I have allergies, will I have an allergic reaction to the COVID vaccine?

If you carry an EpiPen or have had an anaphylactic (serious adverse) reaction to a vaccine, food or medication before you must check with your GP prior to your vaccination. This does NOT include milder reactions e.g. getting a rash when taking penicillin. The approved COVID-19 vaccines do not contain any animal products or egg. If you do have a reaction to the vaccine, it usually happens in minutes. Staff giving the vaccine are trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately.

I've already had COVID-19 do I still need the vaccine?

Yes! It is very important to get the vaccine. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) reports that getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had Covid-19 as it is for those who have not. While you may have some level of immunity, studies have shown that you may still be able to catch and transmit the virus and if you are asymptomatic, you may not even be aware of it.

I'm pregnant/I'm planning a pregnancy should I have the COVID vaccine?

The NHS advise that low risk women should wait until their pregnancy is completed before they are vaccinated. Most women who catch COVID-19 during pregnancy do not suffer a more serious outcome than non-pregnant women and will go on to deliver a healthy baby. If you are pregnant, but believe you are at high risk, please discuss having the vaccine now, with your doctor or nurse.

If you find out that you are pregnant after you have had the vaccine, don't worry. The vaccines do not contain organisms that multiply in the body, so they cannot cause COVID-19 infection in your unborn baby. **More information can be found here:** tinyurl.com/4ennrvyk



Is the COVID-19 vaccine effective?

The first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine 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 but vaccines are the most important thing you can do to protect you, your family, your colleagues and our residents/customers from this serious and potentially deadly virus. "Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or seen very rarely." (NHS).

Will life get back to normal once I've had the vaccine?

It is essential that you continue to follow the COVID-19 restrictions and guidance once you have received your first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. We do not yet know exactly how long protection will last and studies have shown that it is possible to contract COVID-19 twice.

The more people who take up the vaccine the sooner the virus will be better under control, however it will take many weeks before we can be sure the vaccine is having an effect. It is only when hospital admissions start to reduce significantly that scientists will advise next steps in relation to getting back to some normality. We all have a part to play in following the guidance to keep ourselves and each other safe throughout this global pandemic.

I'm trying to stay safe and away from people, will other people be in the waiting room?

The vaccines are given in environments which are well-organised and clean with social distancing and PPE in place. The facilities have staff on site who are constantly cleaning.

I'm scared of needles, is there an alternative?

As it stands, there is no alternative to the needle. All Covid-19 vaccines have to be given via injection (BBC, 2020).

Vaccinations are so important to keep us all (and you) safe, we encourage you to seek support to help you to manage your fear. Remember that the people administering the vaccine are skilled and will understand your fears without judgement. Anxiety UK have provided some support here:

<https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjjm4n6539.pdf&ver=9064>

For further support with a phobia or anxiety, please see:
wearesmt.co.uk/useful-resources/

What if I get ill after the vaccine and then need time off work?

If you have recently received the COVID-19 vaccination but now have new symptoms of the virus (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste) you must contact your line manager. You'll usually need to self-isolate for 10 days from the first day of symptoms if you are symptomatic.

Colleagues who test positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms) will be asked by their manager to complete a Test and Trace form to ensure relevant information is gathered following a positive staff test result.

The Trust's FAQs hold more information:
www.ourtrushub.co.uk

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Common side effects of the vaccine 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. These symptoms are very normal and do not mean that you have COVID-19.

If you have recently received the COVID-19 vaccination and now feel unwell but do not have the symptoms of COVID-19, it is unlikely that you have the virus. In this case follow the usual sickness notification procedure held within the Attendance Policy.

Here are links to 3 short videos about how the vaccine is saving lives to help you to seriously think about taking the vaccine if you haven't already.

The first is from the World Health Organization (WHO), which answers common questions about immunity after vaccination, transmission of the virus and continuing to protect people throughout the pandemic:

<https://youtu.be/YgfeV9bIK4M>

This next video is by North Bristol Trust Associate Non-Executive Director, La Toyah McAllister-Jones, who talks to black and brown people in our communities to urge a better uptake of the vaccination:

<https://youtu.be/zKFltvL2S1Y>

And finally, Dr Patrick Vernon OBE FrHistS, Associate Director at Centre for Ageing Better, talks about his experience of having the COVID vaccine and why it's important for everyone to take the vaccine to save lives:

<https://tinyurl.com/aids5nbq>