

Friday, 17 December 2021

## [Health Protection](#)

**DoH** [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk) **COVID-19 vaccine** **HSC** Health and Social Care

### Waiting after your COVID-19 vaccination

#### What is changing?

Until now, people receiving the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines have been asked to wait for 15 minutes before leaving the vaccine centre in case of serious allergic reaction. **This 15 minute wait has now been suspended for adults after 1st doses, 2nd doses and boosters.**

#### Why is this changing?

- Because of the Omicron variant, the booster programme for adults is being speeded up.
- We now have much more experience with giving these vaccines to millions of people and the rate of serious allergic reactions is very low (around 5-10 per million doses). People are not normally observed for 15 minutes after other vaccinations.

#### Who is advising this change?

The change has been advised by the four UK Chief Medical Officers, and has the support of the Medicines, Health and Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

#### What should I do when I attend for vaccination?

Please make sure you tell the vaccine centre if:

- you have a history of allergic reactions, particularly to other vaccines, or if you had an immediate reaction after a previous dose (A family history of allergies is **not** a risk factor). If so, you may be advised to stay for the 15 minutes.
- you have previously fainted following vaccination.

As with any vaccine, **you must not drive for 15 minutes** after the vaccine – this is because of the risk of fainting. If you do faint, stay flat on your back with your legs raised. If this doesn't make you feel better, then call for help.

Otherwise, you will be able to leave the centre straight after your vaccine as long as you feel OK.

#### What happens if I do get symptoms of an allergic reaction?

Keep this flyer handy. You should look out for the following 'ABC' symptoms:

- Airway**
  - persistent cough
  - vocal change (hoarse voice)
  - swollen tongue causing difficulty swallowing
- Breathing**
  - difficult or noisy breathing
  - wheezing (like an asthma attack)
- Consciousness**
  - feeling lightheaded or prolonged faint
  - clammy skin
  - confusion
  - unresponsive/unconscious

These symptoms typically happen within 15 minutes of vaccination. If you experience any of these, call out for help and **ring 999 immediately** for ask someone to do this for you.

The following symptoms are **NOT** a serious allergic reaction, but imply a more mild reaction:

- Swollen lips, face or eyes
- Itchy skin rash eg hives

If you have any side effects after vaccination, please report to the Yellow Card Scheme

[coronavirus-yellowcard.nhs.uk](https://coronavirus-yellowcard.nhs.uk)

**Public Health Agency**  
19-21 Lisson Road, London W14 8RS  
Tel: 0203 601 6000 or 0300 300 1234  
[www.publichealth.nhs.uk](http://www.publichealth.nhs.uk)

Information correct at time of publication. For the latest version of this leaflet and alternative formats visit the PHA website [www.publichealth.nhs.uk](http://www.publichealth.nhs.uk)

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This factsheet explains why the previous 15-minute observation period following COVID-19 vaccination has been suspended and what to look out for after vaccination. You should still wait 15 minutes before driving and if you have ever experienced an allergic reaction.

**A large print accessible version of this leaflet is available below as a Word document. There is also an [audio recording](#) of this information. Translations in 17 languages are available to download below.**

### Additional information

Vaccination sites can download and print this in advance of hard copies being distributed. There are also posters available below to download and print off for display so people can scan the QR code to take them to this page in addition to the hard copies.

## Details

Format

Various

Target group

Adults receiving the COVID-19 vaccine

## Downloads

Attachment	Size
<a href="#">Waiting after your COVID-19 vaccination A4 single side 1221 FINAL</a>	400.63 KB
<a href="#">Waiting after your COVID-19 vaccination 12.21.docx</a>	17.34 KB
<a href="#">Waiting After Your COVID-19 Vaccination A4 Poster 12_21 FINAL.pdf</a>	172.7 KB
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