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Health and  
Social Care

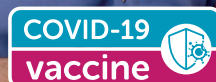
**COVID-19 vaccination**

**Protection for  
health and social  
care workers**

**The COVID-19 vaccine is now available to help  
protect all frontline health and social care workers,  
including HSC Trust employees, care home staff  
and domiciliary and primary care staff**

**COVID-19 immunisation**

Protect yourself.



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Getting your free COVID-19 vaccination as soon as you can should protect you, and may help to protect your family and those you care for.

The COVID-19 vaccine should help reduce the rates of serious illness and save lives, and will therefore reduce pressure on health and social care services.

## Why it's important to get your COVID-19 vaccination

If you're a frontline health and social care worker, you are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 at work. Health and social care workers (particularly in care homes) are at much higher risk of repeated exposure to the infection.

Catching COVID-19 can be serious and may lead to long-term complications. These are more common in older staff or those with underlying clinical risk factors.

You can have COVID-19 without any symptoms and pass it on to family, friends and patients/residents, many of whom may be at increased risk from coronavirus.

Being healthy doesn't reduce your risk of catching COVID-19 or passing it on.

With high rates of COVID-19, it's important to help stop the spread of coronavirus, to avoid pressure on the health service and to keep the health and social care workforce safe.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and how to book, visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine)

## Will the vaccine protect me?

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective and it takes a few weeks for your body to build up protection from the vaccine. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should lessen the severity of any infection.

The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people.



## Will the vaccine protect those I care for?

The evidence on whether COVID-19 vaccination reduces the chance of you passing on the virus is less clear. Most vaccines reduce the overall risk of infection, but some vaccinated people may get a mild infection or an infection with no symptoms and therefore be able to pass the virus on. It is highly likely that any infection in a vaccinated person will be less severe and that they will be infectious for a shorter period of time. We therefore expect that vaccinated health and social care staff will be less likely to pass infection to their friends and family and to the vulnerable people that they care for.

## Will the vaccine have 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 6).

You can take the normal dose of paracetamol (follow the advice in the packaging) and rest to help you feel better. Do not exceed the normal dose.

\* If you are on chemotherapy and have a high temperature, contact your local cancer care unit.

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 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.

## Who cannot have the vaccine?

The vaccines do not contain living organisms, and so are safe for people with disorders of the immune system. These people may not respond so well to the vaccine. There are very few individuals who cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccine, including those who have had a previous systemic allergic reaction to a previous dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine or to any component of the COVID-19 vaccine.

If in doubt, speak to the relevant specialist or the local immunisation or health protection team.

## What if I'm pregnant?

Like all new medicines, the vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnant women. So, we advise that most low risk women should wait until their baby is born before they are vaccinated. Please speak to your employer

about other ways to reduce your risk of COVID-19.

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. As more safety data on the vaccine becomes available this advice may change. If you are pregnant, but believe you are at high risk, you may wish to 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 you or your unborn baby. As for other vaccines, there will be a national monitoring system to follow up women who are vaccinated in pregnancy. We hope this will provide early reassurance for women as time goes on.

Women of childbearing age, those who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, please read the detailed information at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine)



## Can I go back to work after having my vaccine?

Yes, you should be able to work 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.

## 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.

If you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

If you need more information on symptoms visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice)

Please continue to have the regular COVID-19 tests that your employer arranges.

## What do I do next?

Plan to attend your second appointment. You should have a record card with your next appointment written on it, for a date between 3 and 12 weeks after the first.

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

Don't forget your  
COVID-19 vaccination



Make sure you keep this record card with you

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccination or what to do after your vaccination, see [www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine)



COVID-19 immunisation  
Protect yourself.



Name

1 Name of vaccine:   
Batch no:  Date vaccine given:

Don't forget to attend your appointment to have your second dose of vaccine. You will have the best protection after two doses.

Second appointment date:

2 Name of vaccine:   
Batch no:  Date vaccine given:

Public Health Agency | [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

It is important to have both doses of the same vaccine to give you the best protection.

## 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 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.

## After I have had the vaccine, will I still need to follow all the infection prevention and control advice?

While two doses of the vaccine will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill, no vaccine is completely effective and it will take a few weeks for your body to build up protection.

So, you will still need to follow the guidance in your workplace, including wearing the correct personal protection equipment and taking part in any screening programmes.



To continue to protect yourself, your patients/residents, your family, friends and colleagues, you should follow the general advice at work, at home and when you are out and about:

- practise social distancing
- wear a face covering
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- follow the current guidance

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus)

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](http://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk)

## 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.



## I have had my flu vaccine, do I need the COVID-19 vaccine as well?

The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. As you are eligible for both vaccines you should have them both, but normally separated by at least a week.

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## Vaccination, helping to protect those most vulnerable.

If you need more information on the COVID-19 vaccination please visit:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine)

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