

Why do I have to wait for my COVID-19 vaccine?

Those people most at risk from the complications of COVID-19 are being offered the vaccine first.

In the UK, there are two COVID-19 vaccines (made by Pfizer BioNTech and AstraZeneca) likely to be offered first. They both need two separate doses to provide the best protection. These vaccines will not have a full UK marketing authorisation (license) but will have been authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) based on a full assessment of safety and effectiveness.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent group of experts, has recommended that the NHS offers these vaccines to those at highest risk of catching the disease and of suffering serious complications or dying from COVID-19, and to protect the NHS and social care services. This includes older adults 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.

You should have the vaccine when it is offered if you are:

- a person living or working in a care home for older adults
- a frontline healthcare worker
- a frontline social care worker
- a domiciliary carer providing personal care

The vaccine will be offered in the following order to:

- those aged 80 years and over
- those aged 75 years and over
- those aged 70 years and over and adults identified as clinically extremely vulnerable
- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged 16 to 64 years with long term health conditions (see list below)

Long term health conditions include conditions such as:

- blood cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- diabetes
- a heart problem
- a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- kidney disease

- liver disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as HIV infection, steroid medication, chemotherapy or radiotherapy)
- having had an organ transplant
- having had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- a neurological or muscle wasting condition including epilepsy and dementia
- severe or profound learning disability
- Down's syndrome
- a problem with your spleen, e.g. sickle cell disease, or having had your spleen removed
- being seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above)
- severe mental illness

Everyone who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable group will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. This may depend on the severity of your condition. Your GP can advise on whether you are eligible.

At the same time the vaccine will also be offered to:

- those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill
- younger adults in long stay nursing and residential settings, and staff

After these groups, those aged 50 to 64 will be offered vaccination.

When more vaccine becomes available in 2021 we will be offering it to more groups.

I am in one of the listed groups above, why do I have to wait?

COVID-19 vaccines will become available as they are approved for use, and as each batch is manufactured and delivered. People will be called in order, and you will be sent an appointment when your turn comes as soon as there is enough vaccine available.

Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccination?

Vaccines will be offered in a range of settings. Most people will go to the nearest vaccination centre. Some vaccination teams will visit people to offer the vaccine, for example in care homes.

What if the centre I am offered is not easy to get to?

Please try to attend the vaccination centre you are offered. If you cannot attend the centre you are offered you may have to wait to get the vaccine in a more convenient location.

Can I pay for a COVID-19 vaccine privately or at a pharmacy?

No, the COVID-19 vaccination is only available for free through the NHS to eligible groups.

More Information

You can find out more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects

at [https://111.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus\(2019ncov\)](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus(2019ncov)) and www.gov.uk/government/collections/mhra-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19

You can report suspected side effects online at <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights