

The  
**COVID-19**  
vaccine

# Important information



Protect yourself against COVID-19



## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a highly infectious virus that spreads through the air when people cough or sneeze, or when they touch surfaces where it has landed then touch their eyes, nose and mouth. COVID-19 can cause serious illness, hospitalisation and even death.

## Who is most at risk from COVID-19?

People aged 50 or over are most at risk, and the risk increases with age. Older adults living in care homes are at greater risk because large groups of vulnerable people are living together. The virus is highly infectious and spreads quickly. Health and social care workers are also at risk as they may be exposed to infection in a hospital or community setting.

For more information about COVID-19, including symptoms and testing, visit [nhsinform.scot/covid19](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19)



## The COVID-19 vaccines

The COVID-19 vaccines are now available and vaccinations for the most at-risk groups have begun. The first people to be offered the vaccine are:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- people aged 80 and over
- frontline health and social care workers.

**The UK Government has agreed to provide the required provision of vaccines for Scotland and we will not delay vaccinating priority audiences as quickly as possible when they are received.**

## Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

NHS Scotland will only use a vaccine if it meets the required standards of safety and effectiveness. All medicines, including vaccines, are tested for safety and effectiveness before they're allowed to be used. The safety of the vaccines continues to be checked while in use.

We only use a vaccine if it has been through rigorous clinical trials, and has been passed and recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). There is also a rigorous review by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to establish independently whether the vaccine is safe and effective and should be authorised for supply in the UK.

**Please wait to be invited to have the vaccine. Your local NHS health board will be in touch about vaccine arrangements in your area.**

## How do the vaccines work?

The COVID-19 vaccines do not cause COVID-19. They help to build up your immunity to the virus, so your body will fight it off more easily if it affects you. This can reduce your risk of developing COVID-19 or, if you do get COVID-19, it can make the symptoms milder. The vaccine is also suitable for people with disorders of the immune system.

The vaccines' effectiveness will continue to be monitored as the vaccines are rolled out.



## When will I be invited to be vaccinated?

Vaccination is now available for people in the highest risk groups. After we have vaccinated the first priority groups, we will begin to offer the vaccine to other people who are at greater risk.

**Please wait to be invited to have the vaccine. Your local NHS health board will be in touch about vaccine arrangements in your area when you are eligible. For more information please visit [nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine) or call 0800 030 8013.**

**NHS Scotland strongly recommends you get the vaccine as soon as it is offered to you.**

## How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine will be given as an injection in the upper arm.

During vaccination, strict infection prevention and control measures will be in place. It will only take a few minutes to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine will be given in two doses. It is important to get both doses to protect yourself against COVID-19. You will be advised when to return for your second dose.

## How to get the vaccine

COVID-19 vaccination is taking place differently across Scotland. It may not be at your GP practice. Your local NHS health board will be in touch with you to arrange your vaccination appointment when you are eligible.

To find out more information, visit:

**[nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine)** or phone **0800 030 8013**.

### If you are ill on the day

You should still go for your COVID-19 vaccine if you have a minor illness without a fever. If you feel very unwell, your vaccine may be postponed until you have fully recovered.

If you're feeling unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, **do not attend your vaccine appointment**. You should self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test. This can be done at **[nhsinform.scot/testing](https://nhsinform.scot/testing)**

## **I've had COVID-19 before, should I still get the vaccine?**

**Yes.** Even if you've already had COVID-19, you could still get it again. The vaccine will reduce your risk of getting COVID-19. If you do get it again, the vaccine can reduce how serious the symptoms will be.

If you have recently tested positive for COVID-19 – even if you have no symptoms – you should wait until four weeks after the date you were tested to get the vaccine.

## **Can the COVID-19 vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?**

You should ideally wait seven days between the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccination.

**For more information please visit:  
[nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine) or  
call 0800 030 8013.**



## Are there any reasons you should not get the vaccine?

You should not get the COVID-19 vaccine if you have had a severe reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine or a previous dose of the vaccine. This will affect very few people, but the person giving you your vaccine will be happy to answer any questions you have at your appointment.

**The vaccines are not recommended for women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy as they have not been tested on pregnant women. Pregnancy should also be avoided for at least two months after the second dose of the vaccine.** If you are breastfeeding, you should wait until you have finished breastfeeding to have the vaccine.

Women who are pregnant and at high risk of COVID-19 (such as healthcare workers) should be offered the vaccine as soon as possible after the birth of their baby. If you find out you are pregnant after you've started a course of the vaccine, you should wait until after the birth of your baby before finishing the recommended vaccine schedule. Speak to your midwife for more information.

**For more information on potential side effects and vaccine ingredients, visit [nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine) for links to the patient information leaflets, or call 0800 030 8013.**

## Common side effects

Some people may experience side effects after the vaccine. It is important to get two doses of the vaccine, even if you have mild side effects after the first dose. These are usually mild and may include:

- tenderness, swelling and/or redness at the injection site
- headache, muscle ache
- feeling tired
- fever (temperature above 37.8°C).

A less common side effect is swelling of the glands. This starts a few days after the vaccine and may last for up to two weeks. This is to be expected and is a sign of the immune system responding to the vaccine.

If you feel uncomfortable, take paracetamol. Make sure you take paracetamol as directed on the label or leaflet.



## Fever after vaccination

It's quite common to develop a fever after a vaccination. This normally happens within 48 hours of the vaccination and usually goes away within 48 hours.

You do not need to self-isolate or book a COVID-19 test unless you have other COVID-19 symptoms or:

- you have been told by NHS Test and Protect that you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- you live with someone who has recently tested positive for COVID-19
- you live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19.

If the fever starts more than 48 hours after the vaccination or lasts longer than 48 hours, you should self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test. This can be done at

**[www.nhsinform.scot/testing](http://www.nhsinform.scot/testing)**

## Reporting side effects

As with all vaccines, you can report suspected side effects through the Yellow Card Scheme. You can report side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines online at

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

You can also call the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (available Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm).



## Further information

If you're unsure about anything, or have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine) or call **0800 030 8013** (available 8am–8pm 7 days a week) to find out more.

## After the vaccine

We do not know whether having the vaccine stops you spreading the virus to others so it's important that we all continue to follow the latest government advice. After you get the vaccine, it's still important to follow FACTS:



**FACE COVERINGS**



**AVOID CROWDS**



**CLEAN HANDS**



**TWO METRES**



**SELF-ISOLATE**

**Stopping the spread starts with all of us.**





Translations



Easy read



BSL



Audio



Large print



Braille

For more information, including other formats and translation support:



[www.gov.scot/covid19vaccine](http://www.gov.scot/covid19vaccine)



0800 030 8013

Information correct at time of publication. Please visit [www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](http://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine) for the most up-to-date information.

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