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Guidance

# Why you have to wait for your COVID-19 vaccine

Published 7 December 2020

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## **People most at risk from the complications of COVID-19 are being offered the vaccine first.**

In the UK, there are 2 types of COVID-19 vaccine to be used once they are approved. They both require 2 doses to provide the best protection. Both have been shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials.

An independent group of experts has recommended that the NHS first offers these vaccines to those at highest risk of catching the disease and of suffering serious complications or dying from COVID-19. This includes older adults in care homes 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.

## **Eligible groups**

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

- living in a care home for older adults
- a frontline health care worker
- a frontline social care worker
- a carer working in a care home for older residents

Then the vaccine will also be offered in age order to:

- those aged over 80 years
- those aged over 75 years
- those aged over 70 years
- adults on the NHS shielded patient list
- those aged over 65 years
- adults under 65 years with long term conditions (see conditions below)

Those aged 50 to 64 will be offered it later.

Clinical conditions list:

- a blood cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- diabetes
- dementia
- a heart problem
- a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- a kidney disease
- a liver disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as HIV infection, steroid medication, chemotherapy or radiotherapy)
- rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or psoriasis
- have had an organ transplant
- had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- a neurological or muscle wasting condition
- a severe or profound learning disability

- a problem with your spleen, example sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- are seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above)
- are severely mentally ill

At the same time as the adults under 65 years with long term conditions the vaccine will also be offered to:

- adults who provide regular care for an elderly or disabled person
- younger adults in long stay nursing and residential settings

Please wait your turn. If you are not in the groups above, you will have to wait for a COVID-19 vaccination until more supplies are available. When more vaccine becomes available we will be offering it to more groups of the population.

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

The COVID-19 vaccines will become available as they are approved for use and as each batch is manufactured. So every dose is needed to protect those at highest risk. You will be called in as soon as there is enough vaccine available.

Some people who are housebound or live in a care home and who can't get to a local vaccination centre may have to wait for supply of the right type of vaccine. This is because only some vaccines can be transported between people's homes.

## **Where you can get the COVID-19 vaccination**

Vaccines will be offered in a range of settings. Some vaccination teams will visit people to offer the vaccine, for example in care homes, other people may have to go to the nearest centre. Because some of the vaccine has to be stored in a very low temperature freezer, you may not be able to get the vaccine in your normal GP surgery.

## **If the centre you are offered is not easy to get to**

Please try to attend the vaccination centre you are offered. If you cannot attend that centre 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?**

The COVID-19 vaccination is only available through the NHS to eligible groups and it is a free vaccination.

## **Further information**

Please read the product information leaflet for more details on your vaccine, including possible side effects, on the Coronavirus Yellow Card (<https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>) website. You can also report suspected side effects on the same website or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

Further information is available on NHS.UK (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>).

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