

26 April 2021

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Fact check: COVID-19 vaccinations



You've probably read a lot of things about the coronavirus online, but not everything you have seen is true.

It is important to protect yourself and your loved ones from false information about the coronavirus and the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Take a look at this [‘fact check’](#) produced by the Sussex Health and Care Partnership which tackles some of the biggest concerns and inaccuracies out there, and sets the record straight with the facts and trusted information.

Fact: vaccinations save lives

- COVID-19 is potentially fatal. You can protect yourself by getting a vaccination when it is your turn.
- Vaccination is one of the most important things we can do to protect ourselves from ill health. Vaccines prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year. Since they were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or seen very rarely.

Fact: the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and have been thoroughly tested

- The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same rigorous safety tests as over 600 clinical trials that take place every year. They have been tested with adults of all ages, people with a range of health conditions from different ethnic backgrounds.

Fact: you will still need to social distance after you've had your COVID-19 vaccination

- Even if you've had the COVID-19 vaccine, you must follow the rules and stay at home to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Fact: You will never be asked to pay for a COVID-19 vaccination

- The COVID-19 vaccination is ONLY available from the NHS and it is free - you will never be asked to pay for it or give your bank details.

Fact: There are no animal products in the COVID-19 vaccines

- All ingredients are published in the healthcare information on the MHRA's website.
 - [Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine information](#)
 - [Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine information](#)

- The UK vaccine rollout is endorsed by the [British Islamic Medical Association](#), [Hindu Council UK](#), and the [Board of Deputies of British Jews](#).

Fact: you do not need an NHS number to get your vaccination

- It does help to be registered with a GP to help the NHS check for any reasons that someone might not be able to have a vaccine and ensure there is a record of vaccination. [Information on registering with a GP is available](#), and we have included further information on the [Healthwatch website](#).

Fact: the COVID-19 vaccines will not change your DNA

- The COVID-19 vaccines cannot change your DNA. There is no evidence to suggest that your individual genetic material will undergo an alteration after getting the vaccine.

Fact: There is no material of foetal origin in the COVID-19 vaccines

- All ingredients are published in healthcare information on the MHRA's website.
 - [Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine information](#)
 - [Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine information](#)

Fact: refugees and asylum seekers will be able to get the vaccine

- There will be no charges for coronavirus testing, treatment and vaccination.
- Overseas visitors to England, including anyone living in the UK without permission, will not be charged for:
 - testing for COVID-19 (even if the test shows they do not have COVID-19);
 - treatment for COVID-19, including for a related problem called multisystem inflammatory syndrome that affects some children;
 - vaccination against COVID-19.
- No immigration checks are needed for overseas visitors if they are only tested, treated or vaccinated for COVID-19

Fact: you can have the vaccine during Ramadan / the vaccine will not invalidate fasting

- The [British Islamic Medical Association have issued specific advice urging Muslims observing Ramadan not to delay getting the vaccine](#), drawing on analysis from Islamic scholars which says that injections for non-nutritional purposes do not invalidate the fast.

Fact: COVID-19 vaccinations will not be made mandatory

- There are no plans to make the COVID-19 vaccines compulsory. The UK operates a system of informed consent for vaccinations. Just as we do with the winter flu vaccine, the NHS in Sussex is working hard to make sure that people are able to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible, and that any concerns are answered.
- We are confident that most of our eligible population - as they do every year for the flu vaccine - will protect themselves by getting the vaccine.

- The government is consulting on making it compulsory for care staff to have the COVID vaccine. [Take the survey](#) and share your views

Fact: the vaccines do not affect fertility

- There is no evidence that the vaccine affects fertility. The Royal College of Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives issued a statement on 19 January 2021, saying: “There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 vaccines will affect fertility. Claims of any effect of Covid-19 vaccination on fertility are speculative and not supported by any data.”

Find out more

- If you're not sure about an article, story or advice that you've seen or been given, there are ways to check it out. The government's [SHARE checklist](#) helps spot misleading news or content. Independent fact-checking organisations such as [Full Fact](#) also challenge and investigate false or misleading claims.

More information from the British Society of Immunology



Healthwatch is working with [Latest TV](#) and we will be taking part in an upcoming programme with [The British Society of Immunology](#).

We have shared some of your questions concerning vaccine hesitancy with them. The programme should air in April / May time, but we will share any information ahead of this as we receive it.

The British Society of Immunology has shared with us some incredibly useful resources which should help answer many of your questions and queries. Please do take time to read the guides or watch the helpful and clear videos which involve medical experts answering your questions.

[A guide to vaccinations for COVID-19](#) addressing common questions

[What's in a vaccine](#) an infographic and blog explaining in detail the ingredients found in vaccines.

[Types of vaccines for COVID-19](#) - infographics on how the different types of vaccine work.

[COVID-19 vaccine Q&A](#) videos.

Each video sees 10 commonly asked questions which have been sent into us by the public answered by one of our experts.

The questions answered in each video are shown below. We have not included video one which was recorded in October as things have moved on since then.

Video 4 - recorded on 12th February 2021

[COVID-19 vaccine Q&A](#)

- Q1. Why is vaccination more robust than being naturally infected with the virus?
- Q2. How do we know the vaccines are safe if they haven't been around for long?
- Q3. Why do the vaccines have side effects?
- Q4. What strains of the virus are the vaccines tested against?
- Q5. What causes the new strains to be more transmissible?
- Q6. We will need to have yearly vaccinations?
- Q7. What are the benefits and disadvantages of having a different vaccine for the season jab?
- Q8. Is the vaccine less effective in the elderly population?
- Q9. Is there any data showing how protected immune suppressed people will be?
- Q10. Are the vaccines effective?

Video 3 - recorded on 22nd January 2021

[COVID-19 vaccine Q&A](#)

- Q1. Is the second dose of the vaccine necessary?
- Q2. Do we have any more thoughts about how long vaccine immunity lasts?
- Q3. When will we know that having the vaccine prevents you from being a carrier of the virus?
- Q4. What does efficacy mean?
- Q5. What are the chances that a new variant is resistant to the current vaccines?
- Q6. What type of reaction should I expect?
- Q7. I've had COVID, will I have worse or better side effects from the vaccine?
- Q8. Technical question about mRNA.
- Q9. How many different vaccines will there be?
- Q10. How long before vaccines will have an effect and reduce the need to be in lockdown?
- Q11. Are the vaccines effective?

Video 2 - recorded on 20th December 2020

[COVID-19 vaccine Q&A](#)

- Q1. Will I still be able to pass the vaccine to others even if I have the vaccine?
- Q2. Is there any data on how long immunity lasts with the vaccine?
- Q3. If I have another medical condition affect my immune system, should I have the vaccine?
- Q4. If I've already had COVID, should I have the vaccine?
- Q5. Can a pregnant woman have a vaccination?
- Q6. Any reassurance about long-term side effects?
- Q7. Which vaccine might suit the majority of the population?
- Q8. With the right funding, could all vaccines be developed this quickly?
- Q9. What questions should immunologists be asking about these vaccines?
- Q10. Are the vaccines safe?