

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the most common questions and answers gathered across the whole of the Humber region, to help you with any queries or concerns you have around the COVID-19 vaccine.

Is the NHS confident the vaccines are safe?

Yes. The NHS will not offer any Covid-19 vaccinations to the public until independent experts have signed off that it is safe to do so.

The MHRA, the official UK regulator, have said that both of these vaccines have good safety profiles and offer a high level of protection, and we have full confidence in their expert judgement and processes. As with any medicine, vaccines are highly regulated products.

There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process, and continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

Are there any side effects?

These are important details which the MHRA always consider when assessing candidate vaccines for use.

For these vaccines, like lots of others, they have identified that some people might feel slightly unwell, but they report that no significant side effects have been observed in the tens of thousands of people involved in trials.

All patients will be provided with information on the vaccine they have received, how to look out for any side effects, and what to do if they do occur, including reporting them to the MHRA.

More information on possible side effects can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine.

Why is the NHS postponing second doses?

The [UK Chief Medical Officers](#) have agreed a longer timeframe between first and second doses so that more people can get their first dose quickly, and because the evidence shows that one dose still offers a high level of protection after two weeks – 89% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 74% for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

This decision will allow the NHS to get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time and will help save lives.

Getting both doses remains important so the NHS would urge people to return for it at the right time.

Can people pick what vaccine they want?

No. Any vaccines that the NHS will provide will have been approved because they pass the MHRA's tests on safety and efficacy, so people should be assured that whatever vaccine they get, it is worth their while.

How is the NHS ensuring that the vaccine won't be wasted?

The NHS plans are based around ensuring that waste is minimised. For example, this includes grouping vaccinations in one GP practice or high-volume sites on behalf of a few Primary Care Networks or GP surgeries, and ensuring that the numbers of people each facility is able to see is in line with the stock they receive.

To help us avoid any vaccine going to waste, we would encourage everybody who is invited by the NHS to do everything they can to attend their appointment at the vaccination site they are offered. At times, where necessary and to minimise Pfizer / BioNTech vaccine wastage, people in the next JCVI priority patient cohorts may also be offered a vaccination at short notice.

Vaccine priority

Who gets the vaccine first?

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published its detailed advice here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020

In line with this guidance, in this initial phase vaccines will be prioritised for those 80 years of age and over, those who live and work in care home, and frontline health and social care staff.

The NHS ambition, if supplies allow, is to have offered vaccines to the most vulnerable people in Humber Coast and Vale area by the middle of February.

My family member is over 80 but they haven't been yet contacted about the vaccine?

We appreciate that many people are eager to have a vaccination and in the Humber, Coast and Vale region we are working hard to vaccinate people as quickly as we can in line with the JCVI prioritisation. The NHS is inviting eligible people in a phased basis as supplies of the vaccine allow.

Everyone in our area will be offered a vaccination, however the whole programme of work will take some time to complete due to its scale and complexity. If someone

who is eligible has not received an invitation yet, it is likely that they will be invited soon. As more local vaccination services go live (including large vaccination centres), the NHS will invite more people to come forward.

If a household has a priority group member, such as an NHS frontline worker or vulnerable person, will everyone living in that household be vaccinated together?

These decisions are for the JCVI. Their current prioritisation plan does not include household members of NHS staff or clinically vulnerable people automatically – although in some cases family members may be eligible in their own right.

Why have I received a letter inviting me to a large vaccination centre when there is a local site near me?

People who are eligible and haven't already been vaccinated may receive a letter to book an appointment in a large vaccination centre – either online or by phone. If you can't travel to one of these, or there is another reason you can't book an appointment, you can choose to wait until the local GP service contacts you. The number of locations will increase over the coming months.

This list is correct as of 18 January 2021. The information on local vaccination services and hospital hubs is published and regularly updated on the NHS England website www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/vaccination-sites/

What is the progress so far, how many people have been vaccinated in our area?

The latest figures and data on the national and local progress of the vaccination programme is published daily but the NHS England on their website [Statistics » COVID-19 Vaccinations \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/statistics/covid-19-vaccinations/)

I'm worried about attending a vaccination appointment and having to queue with lots of people. How are you maintaining social distancing?

Our covid-19 vaccination programme is well underway and we know people are eager to get to their appointment. However, in order for us to maintain social distancing, space on some of our sites is more limited than normal. We are keeping to time but some people are arriving early for their appointment and unfortunately, in some cases, have to wait outside, which is something we wish to avoid. Please help us keep you safe and warm by arriving on time for your appointment, not early..

Vaccine ingredients and specifics

Does the vaccine include any parts from foetal or animal origin?

No. There is no material of foetal or animal origin in either vaccine. All ingredients are published in healthcare information on the MHRA's website.

For the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19>

For the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>

The Muslim Council of Britain has also circulated [BIMA's position statement](#) on the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, which states they contain no animal products or human embryo cells

Is the vaccine halal?

The British Islamic Medical Association have produced a helpful guide for the Muslim community which can be found at <https://britishima.org/pfizer-biontech-covid19-vaccine>. There are no animal products in either of the vaccines.

Is the vaccine vegan?

There are no animal products in either of the vaccines. The laws and regulatory agencies worldwide currently require that new drugs and treatments are tested on animals before clinical trials on humans. The Vegan Society issued a statement on the COVID-19 vaccine which can be read in full by going to www.vegansociety.com/news/news/vegan-society-response-covid-19-vaccine

An extract from the statement reads: "[The definition of veganism](#) recognises that it is not always possible or practicable to avoid animal use, which is particularly relevant to medical situations. In the case of Covid-19, vaccination will play a fundamental role in tackling the pandemic and saving lives. As all vaccines currently are tested on animals, at this stage it is impossible to have a vaccine that has been created without animal use."

Can the vaccine alter your genetic material?

There is no evidence to suggest that individual genetic material will undergo an alteration after receiving the vaccine.

I have allergies, can I have the vaccine?

COVID vaccines are safe and effective for the vast majority of people – they have been tested on tens of thousands of people and assessed by experts.

Any person with a history of immediate-onset anaphylaxis to the ingredients contained in the vaccines should not receive them.

Checking for allergies is a routine part of the process before giving any vaccine or new medicine. Having these conversations – as well as being able to deal with allergic reactions in the rare case they do happen, is a central part of training for vaccinators. Please speak to the vaccinating clinician about any of your concerns.

Does the vaccine work on those taking immune suppressants?

Although the vaccine was not tested on those with very serious immunological conditions, the vaccine has been proven to be very effective and it is unlikely that the vaccine will have no effect at all on these individuals.

There may be a very small number of people with very complex or severe immunological problems who can't make any response at all – but the vaccine should not do any harm to these individuals. Individuals meeting these criteria may want to discuss the vaccine further with their specialist doctor.

I am pregnant/planning to have a baby. Should I get the vaccine?

The MHRA have updated their guidance to say that pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding can have the vaccine but should discuss it with a clinician to ensure that the benefits outweigh any potential risks.

[You can read more about advice for people of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding on the gov.uk website.](#)

Should I be worried about the impact of Covid-19 vaccines on fertility?

No. Both the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives are reassuring women that there is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 vaccines will affect fertility. Women who are eligible for the vaccination should discuss any concerns with a clinician. [You can read more about this on the Royal College website.](#)

Travel to vaccination sites

I am housebound. How can I get my vaccine?

We are planning a mixed approach in Humber Coast and Vale area to ensure that people who are eligible can get the vaccine safely. For care home residents and housebound people, this will involve roving community teams coming to them. These will be introduced as the vaccination programme progresses.

I have received a letter to have my vaccine at a vaccination centre in York but I'd struggle to travel there. Can I have my vaccine somewhere closer to home?

If you'd struggle to get to a large vaccination centre you can wait until more vaccination centres, closer to where you live, become available. Alternatively, you still have an option to have your vaccine arranged through your local GP practice network. They will contact you about it separately. You do not need to contact your local GP to ask for the vaccine. They will let you know when it's your turn.

The NHS will follow up with people that haven't booked their appointment, as a reminder.

Where and when will I receive my second dose?

The 1st dose of the COVID-19 vaccine should give you good protection from coronavirus. But you need to have the 2 doses of the vaccine to give you longer lasting protection. You will have the 2nd dose 3 to 12 weeks after having the 1st dose. You will be offered an appointment to have your 2nd vaccine dose at the same location you received your 1st dose.

Health and social care worker vaccination programme

Why are healthcare workers amongst the first groups to receive the vaccine?

The JCVI have put patient-facing health and social care staff into a priority group because of their heightened risk of exposure to the virus. Employers have been asked to offer the vaccine to the most at risk healthcare workers first. With many more doses now expected over the coming weeks, employers will be widening this out and protecting staff as soon as possible.

The NHS is experienced in vaccinating staff quickly and safely. The Humber, Coast and Vale vaccination programme office is working with local NHS and health and social care employers to offer all eligible staff the opportunity to take it up over the coming weeks and months.

Who is included in the health and social care cohort?

The health and social care cohort includes:

- Staff employed by the NHS
- Social care staff employed by local authority
- Third sector/private organisations
- Privately employed individuals
- Private contractors/individual practitioners
- Large national/regional organisations

More information is available from the [Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a) www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a