

The
COVID-19
vaccine

Important information

Protect yourself against COVID-19



When offered the vaccine, please get it

What is COVID-19?

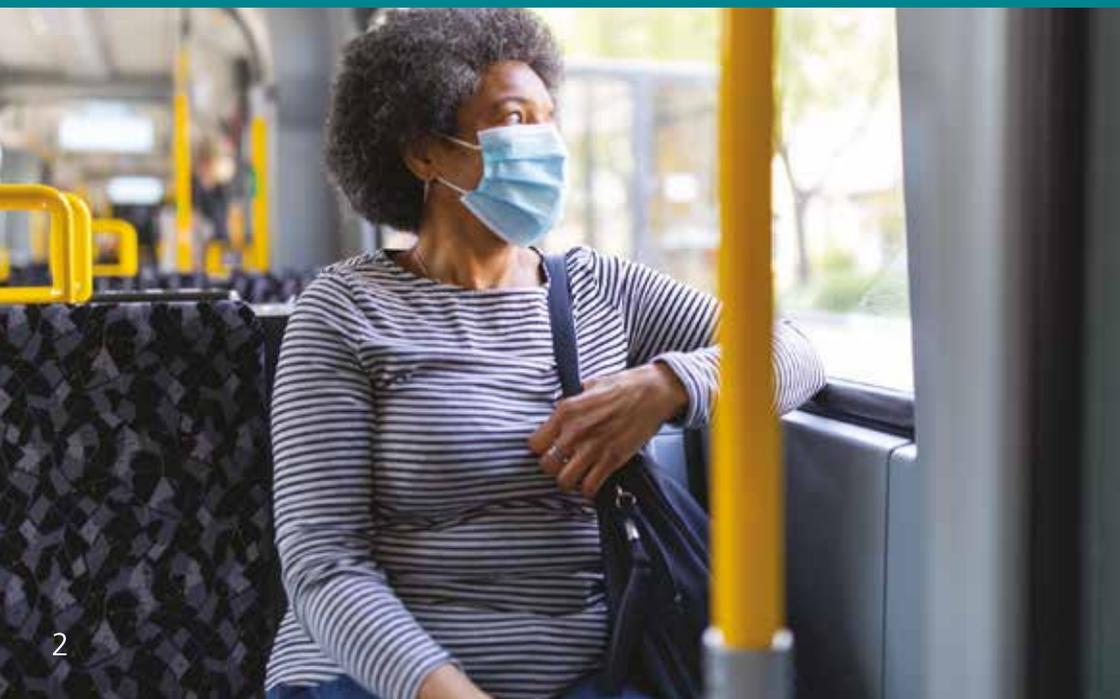
COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by a new coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2. It was first identified in late 2019. It is highly infectious and spreads through the air when people cough or sneeze, or when they touch surfaces where it has landed then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

COVID-19 can cause serious illness, hospitalisation and even death. For more information about COVID-19, including symptoms, visit nhsinform.scot/covid19

Who is at risk from COVID-19?

COVID-19 can affect anyone. If you are an older adult and have a long-term health condition, COVID-19 can be very serious and in some cases fatal.

For more information about other groups at risk from COVID-19, visit nhsinform.scot/covid19



The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19

- The vaccine will reduce your risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19. Catching COVID-19 can be serious and may lead to long-term complications. Being healthy does not reduce your risk of getting COVID-19 and passing it on.
- You can spread COVID-19 to family and those around you, even if you have very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.
- With high rates of COVID-19, it's more important than ever to stop the spread of the virus. The COVID-19 vaccine should help reduce the rates of serious illness and save lives.
- Getting your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as you can should protect you, and may help to protect your family and those around you.

Who will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert group, has recommended that the vaccine is offered first to those at highest risk of getting COVID-19 and of suffering serious complications if they get COVID-19.

We will follow the JCVI advice and vaccinate those most at risk first, and those who work closest with them – residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, followed by people over 80 and frontline health and social care workers, then other people in order of age and risk.

All people who are in the clinically extremely vulnerable group will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as those over 70 are offered the vaccine. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are those who were recommended by

the NHS to shield. People with underlying health conditions who are not on the shielding list will be offered the vaccine shortly after that.

For more information and to see the JCVI priority list, visit nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine

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



Are there any reasons you should not get the vaccine?

There are very few people who cannot get the COVID-19 vaccines.

The vaccine should not be given to:

- people who have had a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of this COVID-19 vaccine
- those who have had a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to any of the ingredients of the vaccine.

For more information on vaccine ingredients, and links to the patient information leaflets, visit [nhsinfom.scot/covid19vaccine](https://nhs.uk/infomscot/covid19vaccine) or call 0800 030 8013.

People with a history of serious allergic reaction to food, an identified drug or vaccine, or an insect sting can get any COVID-19 vaccine, as long as they are not known to be allergic to any component of the vaccine. It's important that you tell the person giving you your vaccine if you've ever had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

People with bleeding disorders or people taking medication to thin the blood or reduce bleeding should consult their specialist for advice on vaccination.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

The COVID-19 vaccines are not routinely recommended during pregnancy as they have not been tested on pregnant women.

For up-to-date advice on COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy and breastfeeding, visit

nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine

Is the vaccine 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 Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has to assess all the data and also ensure a vaccine works and that all the necessary trials and checks have been completed.

It will study:

- lab and clinical trial results
- manufacturing and quality controls
- product sampling
- testing of the final product.

This has been done as quickly as possible without cutting corners, because the COVID-19 vaccines are a priority.

The MHRA will only approve a vaccine for supply in the UK if the expected standards of safety, quality and efficacy are met.

The safety and effectiveness of the vaccines continues to be checked while in use.

How does the vaccine work?

The COVID-19 vaccine does not cause COVID-19. It helps 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.

How is the vaccine given?

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

The COVID-19 vaccine will be given in two doses. You will be advised when to return for your second dose. The second dose can be given between 3 and 12 weeks after the first dose. COVID-19 vaccination offers good protection within two to three weeks of the first dose.

The second dose completes the course and is likely to be important for longer-term protection. It is important to get both doses to protect yourself against COVID-19.

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.

How to get the vaccine

COVID-19 vaccination is taking place differently across Scotland. It may not be at your GP practice. NHS Scotland will be in touch with you to arrange your vaccination appointment when it's your turn.

If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine or call **0800 030 8013** (available 8am–8pm, 7 days a week).

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

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 vaccination and any other vaccination.

How to prepare for the vaccination

On the day of your vaccine, wear practical clothing so it's easy to access your upper arm.

If you have a fear of needles or feel anxious, try to stay calm and let the person giving you your vaccine know. They will be understanding and can support you.

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).

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

Fever after the vaccine

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 **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

This information is a guide only. Always get medical advice from NHS24 free on **111** if you're worried about your health.

For more information about potential side effects, visit nhsinfom.scot/covid19vaccine

Common symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms are:



new
continuous
cough



fever/high
temperature
(37.8°C or
greater)



loss of, or
change in,
sense of smell
or taste

It is also possible to have COVID-19 without showing any symptoms. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should self-isolate and get a test.

Further information

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

After the vaccine

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but the illness should be less severe.

It's not known 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



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For more information, including other formats and translation support:



www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine



0800 030 8013



phs.otherformats@phs.scot



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