

More information on the vaccination programme

How to get the vaccine

Vaccinations are taking place differently across Scotland to reflect the needs of local communities.

Your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination may not take place at your GP practice.

As the vaccine becomes available the eligible groups will be contacted in priority order to explain how they can get the vaccine in their area.

To find out more information, visit www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine or phone **0800 030 8013**.

Who will be offered the vaccine first?

As with all vaccines, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert body, recommends priority groups based on clinical evidence. For the COVID-19 vaccine, those to be offered immunisation in the first phase in order of priority are below. The first groups that are already being vaccinated include:

- Residents in care homes for older adults and their carers
- Frontline health and care staff
- Those aged 80 and over

JCVI advises the order of priority for the vaccination is:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 65 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious illness or death
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Further information about the vaccine



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.



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.

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



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.



If you are ill on the day

You should still go for your COVID-19 vaccine if you have a minor illness without 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://www.nhs.uk/infocentre/articles/2020/11/20/how-to-get-tested-for-covid-19/).

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.



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

Who should not get the vaccine?



You should not get the coronavirus vaccine if you've had a severe anaphylactic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine or a previous dose of the vaccine.

This will affect very few people, but you will be able to ask any questions at your appointment.

Find out more about [the vaccines and their ingredients here](#).

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and the vaccine



The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is not routinely recommended if you're pregnant, as it has not been tested on pregnant women.

If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, [read more about the coronavirus vaccine and pregnancy here](#).



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.

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.