




Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives




Even once
vaccinated with
one or two doses,
you must continue to
follow other protective
guidance as
required

COVID-19

vaccination

A guide for adults

Revised May 2021



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KEEP WALES SAFE

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What is COVID-19 or Coronavirus?

COVID-19 is caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. It was first identified in late 2019. It is very infectious and can lead to severe respiratory disease. Many people who are infected may not have any symptoms or only have mild symptoms. These commonly start with cough, fever, headache and loss of taste or smell.

Some people will feel very tired, have aching muscles, sore throat, diarrhoea, vomiting, fever or confusion. A small number of people then go on to have severe disease, which may require hospitalisation or admission to intensive care.

Overall just under 1 in 100 people who are infected will die from COVID-19. Severe disease is rare in children but the risk increases with age. For example, the average risk of dying from COVID-19 in someone aged 40-49 is three times higher than someone in the 30-39 age group and 12 times higher than someone in the 20-29 age group. There is no cure for COVID-19 although some treatments reduce the risk of complications.

Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Healthy adults are at risk of complications from COVID-19, and the risk is higher for older adults or those with certain health conditions. About 15% of younger adults, including those in their 20s, get symptoms which can last for months after being infected ('long COVID'). Having a COVID-19 vaccine protects most people against serious complications from COVID-19.

We all want to get life going again and the vaccination programme is a big step towards this.

Lots of people in Wales recognise this too - a survey in 2021 showed that around 80% of younger adults said they would get vaccinated.

Uptake of the vaccine in the first part of the vaccination programme has been very high.

If you want to travel abroad in the future, some countries might ask you to prove you have been vaccinated. COVID-19 rates are higher in some other countries.

Vaccines offer us hope for controlling the pandemic but we need as many people to get vaccinated as possible for this to work best. Every vaccination counts, including yours.



Vaccination is quick, easy and safe

Are the vaccines safe?

In the UK several different types of COVID-19 vaccines will be used. Each vaccine has been tested in tens of thousands of people in several different countries. Their safety and effectiveness has been carefully assessed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) before being authorised for use.

In the UK more than 34 million people have been vaccinated and this has already prevented many cases and more than ten thousand deaths from COVID-19. The MHRA continuously reviews the safety of vaccines in use, based on all side effects reported by healthcare professionals and the public.

Recently there have been reports of an extremely rare condition involving blood clots and unusual bleeding after vaccination with the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is being carefully reviewed.

Because of the high risk of complications and death from COVID-19, the MHRA, the World Health Organization and the European Medicines Agency have concluded that the balance of risk and benefit is very much in favour of vaccination.

For more information on the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination and blood clots see:

phw.nhs.wales/patientinfo.

Can we trust vaccines that have been developed so quickly?

The research and clinical trials needed to make sure a vaccine works and is safe take time, **but a lot of time is taken getting funding and approval for the research.** A number of things have helped to speed up the process:

- The UK Government funded the development of COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials to get them up and running quickly
- The MHRA sped up their process of approval – things like administrative paperwork that used to take months is now being done in days
- Different parts of trials have run at the same time
- New technology has helped to make lots of vaccine quickly

Everything has still been done to make sure the vaccines work and are safe. After a vaccine begins to be used, the MHRA continues to study its safety and examines all reported adverse events.

Will the vaccine protect me?

All of the approved vaccines are extremely effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill from COVID-19. Studies have shown high levels of short-term protection develop two to three weeks after a single dose of vaccine, but for most vaccines a second dose is required for longer-term protection. Like all medicines, no vaccine is 100% effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

Am I eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine?

Now that the first groups and those aged over 50 have been offered the vaccine, the JCVI has advised that all adults aged 18 to 49 years should be offered the vaccine next, in age groups:

- **40-49 year olds**
- **30-39 year olds**
- **18-29 years old (aged 18 on the day of vaccination)**

You will be contacted when it is time for you to receive your vaccine.

I am pregnant, can I have the vaccine?

Yes, if you are pregnant, you should consider getting vaccinated. You are encouraged to read the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists' decision aid at this link: www.rcog.org.uk/covid-vaccine before attending your vaccination appointment. The information in this aid can help you make an informed decision. If you have any further questions speak to your midwife or GP.

We know many vaccines can be given safely in pregnancy, but COVID-19 vaccines have not been tested in pregnancy. More than 90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in the USA with no safety issues identified. These vaccines are therefore preferred for pregnant women.

There is also a separate leaflet: **COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for all women who are planning a pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding.**

You do not need to avoid pregnancy after receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Can I have the vaccine if I am breastfeeding?

The benefits of breastfeeding are well known, and the COVID-19 vaccines are not known to be a risk when breastfeeding. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the JCVI have recommended that the vaccine can be given to women who are breastfeeding. However we do not have much safety data on the use of COVID-19 vaccines while breastfeeding. If you are breastfeeding, or are planning to, you **can** continue breastfeeding after vaccination.

Will the vaccine affect my fertility?

No, there is no evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility.

Who cannot have the vaccine?

A very small number of people cannot have some COVID-19 vaccines. This includes people who have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or to a previous dose of the same vaccine, or who have certain rare blood disorders. Those people may be offered an alternative vaccine.

If you are currently unwell with a fever or have had a positive COVID-19 test in the last 28 days you should book a later appointment.

Does the vaccine have side effects?

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. This is because vaccines work by triggering a response in your immune system. Most of these are mild and only last a few days, and not everyone gets them.

Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you should still have the second dose.

Very common side effects in the first day or two include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection for several days after the vaccine;
- feeling tired;
- a headache;
- general aches, chills, or flu like symptoms.

A mild fever may occur for two to three days after vaccination but a high temperature is unusual and may indicate you have COVID-19 or another infection. You can take paracetamol (follow the advice on dose and intervals in the packaging) and rest to help you feel better. Do not take more than the recommended dose.

An uncommon side effect is swollen glands in the armpit or neck on the same side as you had your vaccination. This can last for about 10 days, but if it lasts longer speak to your doctor.

Common side effects following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or you are concerned, look at:

111.wales.nhs.uk online, and if necessary call NHS 111 Wales on **111** or your GP surgery. If 111 is not available in your area, call **0845 46 47**. Calls to NHS 111 Wales are free from landlines and mobiles. Calls to 0845 46 47 cost 2p per minute plus your telephone provider's usual access charge.



If you experience any of the following from around 4 days to four weeks after vaccination, you should seek medical advice urgently.

- ◆ A new, severe headache which is not helped by usual painkillers or is getting worse
- ◆ An unusual headache which seems to get worse when lying down or bending over or may be accompanied by:
 - Blurred vision, nausea and vomiting
 - Difficulty with your speech
 - Weakness, drowsiness or seizures
- ◆ New, unexplained pinprick bruising or bleeding
- ◆ Shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling or persistent abdominal pain

If you have had any of the above symptoms after your first vaccination, you should speak to your doctor or specialist before having the second dose.

If you do seek advice from a doctor or nurse, make sure you tell them about your vaccination (show them your vaccination card if possible) so that they can assess you properly.

You can also report any side effects through the Yellow Card scheme (see 'More information').

Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine. But it is possible to catch COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination.

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

If you have any of these symptoms, stay at home and arrange to have a test by phoning 119 (calls are free). Some health boards are offering tests for a wider range of symptoms, so please check your local health board website for any additional symptoms that would make you eligible for a test in your area. If you need more information on symptoms visit:

111.wales.nhs.uk

What do I need to do?

You will receive information about when and where to get vaccinated. On the day of the appointment, wear practical clothing so it's easy to get to the top of your arm. If you have a fear of needles or feel anxious, let the person giving your vaccine know. They will be understanding and support you.

It is important to have both doses of the vaccine to give you the best longer-term protection. Keep your card safe and make sure you attend your next appointment to get your second dose.

What should I do if I am unwell on the day of my next appointment?

If you are unwell with a fever, call to cancel and wait until you have recovered to have the vaccine. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating or waiting for a COVID-19 test or result.

Do I still need to follow the guidance if I have had a vaccine?

The vaccine will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill, but it won't completely stop you from catching and passing on the virus. So, it is important you continue to follow the COVID-19 guidance to protect those around you.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- practice social distancing;
- wear a face mask;
- wash your hands carefully and frequently;
- self-isolate if you get symptoms or are contacted by the Test, Trace, Protect service; and
- follow the current guidance at: **gov.wales/coronavirus**

Remember:

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after touching contaminated objects and surfaces.

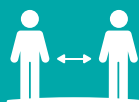
Three rules to KEEP WALES SAFE



Wash your
hands



Wear a
face covering



Keep
apart

More information

You can find out more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects at:

[111.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus\(2019ncov\)](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus(2019ncov))
and **coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/productinformation**

You can report suspected side effects online at: **coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk** or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit: **111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights**

For other formats of this leaflet including Easy Read, large print, British Sign Language video, Recite Me accessibility software and other languages visit:



phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination

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