Who should have the COVID-19 vaccine as a priority?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert group, has recommended that the NHS offers these vaccines first to those at highest risk of catching the infection and of suffering serious complications if they catch the infection.

This includes older adults, frontline health and social care workers, care home residents and staff, and those with certain clinical conditions. When more vaccine becomes available, the vaccines will be offered to other people at risk as soon as possible.

I've had the Flu Vaccine, won't that work on COVID-19?

No, the Flu vaccine does not work on COVID-19, so you should have both – you are advised not to have both vaccines within 7 days of each other.

I've heard there's live organisms in the Vaccine is that true?

The vaccines do not contain living organisms, and so are safe for people with disorders of the immune system. These people may not respond so well to the vaccine, but for many it will still be recommended.

I have underlying health conditions – is the Vaccine safe for me?

A very small number of people who are at risk of COVID-19 cannot have the vaccine – this includes people who have severe allergies or those with some blood clotting disorders. GPs will be able to advise individuals if the vaccine will be suitable for them.

How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?

The Pfizer and Oxford / AstraZeneca vaccines have both been authorised and recommended to prevent COVID-19 in the UK, and both need two doses to be effective. There are other vaccines going through approval for use in the UK as we write this.

Once my relative has had the first injection, how long will they wait for the second one?

Depending on Vaccine type – there is up to 12 weeks between vaccinations – at the time of the first vaccine, you will be given your second dose date.

Will the 2 doses of the vaccine mean that my relative is then immune?

The COVID-19 vaccine is considered to offer up to 95% protection from the virus and may keep people from becoming seriously ill or from developing severe complications should a person still contract the virus.

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. Data has shown that optimal immunity develops 7 days after the second dose. However, even after the first dose significant immunity is provided.

The vaccine is free, and it will protect you against COVID-19 so you can keep protecting others. The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people.

Will the vaccine have side effects?

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. Even if your relative does have symptoms after the first dose, they will still need to have the second dose. Although they may get some protection from the first dose, having the second dose will give them long lasting protection against the virus.

Very common side effects include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection. This tends to be worst around 1-2 days after the vaccine
- feeling tired
- headache
- general aches, or mild flu like symptoms

Although feeling feverish is not uncommon for two to three days, a high temperature is unusual and may indicate COVID-19 or another infection. Your relative will be supported to feel comfortable and supported them to feel better. Symptoms following vaccination normally last less than a week.

If my relative has already had COVID-19 and recovered, does she or he still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The NHS still recommends that the Vaccine should be given, due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19. Re-infection rates are still not known so the Vaccine affords protection against serious complications relating to COVID-19 infection.

My relative is currently infected with COVID-19, should they still get vaccinated?

Anyone currently infected with COVID-19 will be asked to wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation. Currently we do not vaccinate within 28 days of infection.

So, if my relative has the vaccine, can I come in and hug them?

At the moment, no, while we learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using **all the tools** available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering the mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 2 metres away from others.

Could my relative catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have it until after your vaccination appointment. We continually watch for symptoms of Covid-19 in residents and we list the most commons signs below, but there are other soft signs that we monitor in older people too.

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 or someone you love has the symptoms above, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

If you need more information on symptoms visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/symptoms

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Could a resident or team member give COVID-19 to anyone after having the vaccine?
No. Other residents or team members having had the vaccine, cannot give your relative a COVID-19 infection from that vaccine.

How will I be kept up to date with the vaccination programme as it affects my relative?
The Home Manager will keep residents, relatives, and team members up to date on the progress of the vaccination programme. For those not in the home, this is most easily undertaken by email, so please do share your email address with us, if you have not already done so.

If you need more information on the COVID-19 vaccination, please visit:
www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination

Pictures from Sewa Day

Sewa is a sanskrit word used to describe a universal concept, which involves performing an act of kindness without expectation of reward. It is performed selflessly and without ulterior motive.

On Sewa Day, thousands of people across the world come together to perform Sewa and experience the joy of giving in its truest sense. By participating in this collective endeavour, we hope that the seeds of Sewa are watered so that acts of kindness and public service are performed more often.

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