This information sheet was produced 04/02/21 from NHS, gov.uk and academic sources. It includes frequently asked questions as well as some questions that have been submitted by Enfield staff or residents.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COVID VACCINE**

**Who can have the vaccine?**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is tasked with deciding which groups of people should receive the vaccine. The JCVI has decided those that are most at risk of Covid should receive the vaccination. Cohorts 104 include residents in care homes, frontline health and social care workers, those over 70 and people who are clinically extremely vulnerable. In due course, the whole adult population will be offered the vaccine.

**How quickly does the vaccine work?**

We do not yet know for certain whether the vaccine will stop all possibility of you catching and passing on the virus, but we do expect it to considerably reduce this risk. The vaccination should be seen as another form of protection but you must still continue with the following to ensure protection for you and those around you: practice social distancing, wear a face mask, wash your hands carefully and frequently and follow the most up-to-date gov.uk guidance. We expect these vaccines to work for at least a year but await further evidence to know for certain. This will be constantly monitored.

**It seems the vaccine was produced very quickly; how was that possible?**

The pandemic prompted an international effort to find a vaccine with a phenomenal investment of resources. The reasons the scientific community were able to make a rigorously tested vaccines so quickly include the lack of funding barriers, global collaboration, previous vaccine research, the willingness of volunteers to take part in the trial, manufacturing time, regulatory processes and overlapping of phases of the clinical trial.

**How will I be invited for a vaccination? How/when will I go for the second? Will this be at the same place/what happens if there is a delay in between?**

When it is the right time people will be contacted to make their appointments. For most people they will receive a letter, phone or text either from their GP or the national booking system; this will include all the information they need, including their NHS number.  Enfield is offering vaccinations at several sites: three GP surgery sites, some community pharmacies and the Dugdale centre.

You will be contacted by 12 weeks after the first dose by the service that booked your first dose to book in your second dose.

**What happens at the appointment?**

Your appointment should last for around 30 to 45 minutes. You'll be asked some questions about your medical history. Tell the staff giving you the vaccination if you have ever had a severe allergic reaction or you are pregnant. You will then be given an injection of the vaccine into your upper arm.

All locations that offer Covid vaccinations will help keep you safe from Covid. There will be regular cleaning and social distancing in waiting areas. You'll need to bring: a face covering, unless you cannot wear one for a health or disability reason; your booking reference numbers if your appointment is at a vaccination centre.

You may be asked to wait for 15 minutes after having the vaccination. This is in the unlikely event you have a serious reaction to the vaccine. Research has found it's very rare to have a serious allergic reaction to the vaccine.

**Can I choose which vaccine I receive?**

No, you will not have the to offer of a choice of vaccine. All of the Covid vaccines that have been approved for use in England have been rigorously tested and are safe and effective. Covid vaccines will become available as soon as each batch is manufactured. If you decline to have the vaccine but then change your mind please recontact your GP or the national booking system and rearrange a vaccine appointment.

**Can someone come with you for support?**

You may bring a carer with you to your appointment if you need support. Additionally, many sites have marshals on hand to assist you so please do let them know if you require support for mobility issues.

**Can you have the vaccine if you have allergies?**

These 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. A second dose of the vaccine should not be given to those who have experienced anaphylaxis to the first dose of vaccination. Like with any other vaccine, the vaccinators will have the training they need to deal with any rare cases of adverse reactions.

**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 website. They are therefore halal/kosher/vegetarian and vegan friendly.

**Is the vaccine Halal?**

The British Islamic Medical Association has published the following: “The Oxford AstraZeneca Vaccine contains ethanol at an amount that is less than what is found in natural foods or bread. Many scholars have deemed the Oxford AZ Vaccine to be permissible as the amount of ethanol is negligible. Declaring a product Halal or Haram is a call for Islamic scholars who have studied on this for years. The simple presence of a particular ingredient is not the only factor taken into account. Most previous vaccines, including the Pfizer-Biontech vaccine, have been declared halal by the majority of scholarly bodies worldwide.”

**Can the vaccine alter your genetic material?**

The vaccine does not alter or affect your genetics or DNA.

**Should people who have already had Covid or are suffering from ‘Long Covid’ get vaccinated?**

Yes, when you are offered the vaccine. Getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had Covid as it is for those who haven’t, including those who have mild residual symptoms. Where people are suffering significant ongoing complications from Covid they should discuss with a health professional. The guidelines currently state to wait 28 days from when you had COVID and once you are feeling well before having your vaccination.

**Is there a risk to pregnancy?**

Pregnant women were not recruited into the trial. In most trials pregnant women are excluded so this is not unexpected. Therefore, we have no evidence to suggest that the vaccine is harmful to women and a child during pregnancy but neither do we have sufficient evidence to prove that it is safe. The decision to have the vaccination if you are pregnant is a personal one to make with your doctor.

**Is there a risk to fertility?**

Both the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (the faculty for all doctors that look after women in pregnancy) and the Royal College of Midwifery have released statements saying that there is no evidence the vaccine reduces fertility, nor any plausible mechanism by which the vaccine could reduce fertility.

**What is the local authority doing to make sure that the communities most affected have access to the vaccine?**

We are reaching out to everyone in the community – religious groups, community groups, local GPs, hospital staff, schools and local authority staff – to help spread the word that the vaccine is available and safe. We will be running online community events to answer questions that our residents might have, distributing information over the internet and in print and trying to provide all residents the information they need to feel informed.

**There are also videos circulating around social media that there are specific vaccines for people of different origins. Is this true?**

No, the vaccines available are not specially for different groups.

Groups of specialist doctors and scientists who have many years’ experience in immunology, virology and building vaccines have made these vaccines. These have passed the rigorous tests required to be rolled out in the UK. People of all ethnicities were included in the trial and the vaccine is safe for everyone. There are two vaccines currently available but which vaccine you receive has nothing to do with your ethnicity. The vaccine available at each site is based on transport and storage considerations.

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

GOV.UK, Covid-19 Vaccination Guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-easy-read-resources/information-on-covid-19-vaccination-easy-read-guide>

NHS, Covid-19 Vaccination Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

North Central London CCG, Covid-19 FAQs for Patients

<https://northcentrallondonccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Covid-19-vaccine_FAQs-for-patients_111220.pdf>

North Central London CCG, Covid-19 General FAQs

<https://northcentrallondonccg.nhs.uk/my-health/covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations-in-north-central-london/frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>

GOV.UK, Covid-19 vaccination information for women of childbearing age, pregnant or breast feeding. Information provided in 18 languages.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding>

British Islamic Medical Association FAQs

<https://britishima.org/operation-vaccination/hub/covidmyths/#ATM>

South Asian Health Foundation Covid resources

<https://www.sahf.org.uk/covid19>

**USEFUL VIDEO LINKS**

NHS vaccine in community languages

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/covid-19-vaccine-communication-materials/>

Caribbean and African Health Network ‘Health Hour Covid vaccine panel’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGFqlbPbuaQ>

PHE, Video Playlist, Dr Mary Ramsay, Covid-19 Vaccine Explainer - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLDAq3SAWJh0nhlaX4q53qhSbUsNwqTZw>

PHE, Video Playlist, Dr. Wei Shen Lim, Covid-19 Vaccine Information - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLDAq3SAWJh1yUljy2wp6zT5lZYnBJtMJ>

PHE, Video Playlist, Dr Julia Yates, Covid-19 Vaccine Explainer - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLDAq3SAWJh2UPfzA8B4Jw43LNaDq-tGj>

PHE, Video Playlist, Dr Kevin Brown, Covid-19 Vaccine Explainer - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLDAq3SAWJh3tD8wS7ir7iBrU9ahDjuUT>

PHE, Video Playlist, Professor Anthony Harnden, Covid-19 Vaccine Information - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLDAq3SAWJh2wqoofkJcWDIriAfdKb5n6>