



Staffordshire and
Stoke-on-Trent
Integrated Care System

NHS

Questions and Answers:
COVID-19 vaccination
for pregnant women and
mums who are
breastfeeding



Are you pregnant or a new mum?

COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all pregnant and breastfeeding women.

COVID-19 infection continues to circulate and can be serious for pregnant women. Research has shown that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and can protect you and your unborn baby. Worldwide and within the UK thousands of pregnant women have been safely vaccinated and have gone on to become pregnant after receiving the vaccine.

In this leaflet you will find frequently asked questions with answers and advice from healthcare professionals about the vaccine.

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, please contact us: ssotics.comms@nhs.net.



I'm pregnant



Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, it is impossible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The vaccine does not contain live SARS COV2 virus. If you find out you are pregnant after you have started a course of vaccine, you may continue to have your boosters during pregnancy using the same vaccine product (unless your midwife or doctor says there is a reason not to have this vaccine).

Can I have the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other recommended vaccines, eg. Flu vaccine?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine or booster dose can be given at the same time as other recommended vaccines, such as the flu vaccine and the whooping cough vaccine. It is recommended by the JCVI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) to have both the flu and the COVID-19 vaccines when offered to you as this will reduce your chance of being very unwell if you were to get either flu or COVID-19. You can receive these vaccines at any point in your pregnancy, and are encouraged to do so as soon as possible to ensure maximum protection for you and your baby.



I've had my first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Are boosters recommended for people who are pregnant?

You will be eligible for a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine 12 weeks after your second dose. It is recommended you get all available doses of the vaccine so that you get the best possible protection.





What is a booster dose, and how do I get one?

Everyone is eligible for a 1st and 2nd dose as a primary course of vaccination against COVID-19. People who are immunosuppressed at the time of either their 1st or 2nd dose, will be invited to receive a 3rd primary dose to boost their immunity. A booster is a top-up dose of the vaccine to increase your immunity. This is because an individual's immunity against COVID-19 will wane after having one, two, or any subsequent doses of the vaccine. A vaccination clinic will offer you the correct dose for what you need, depending on your health and condition at the time.

I've had my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and it made me feel poorly. Will that happen again with the booster doses?

As with all medicines, some people have had mild, short-term side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine, but other people have no side effects. The very common side effects include having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection, feeling tired, headache, aches and chills. These should only last a day or two. You should rest, drink plenty of water, especially if you develop a high temperature and take paracetamol (please consider any other medication you are on and follow the advice on the packaging).

If your symptoms seem to get worse, last longer than one week or if you are concerned, contact **NHS 111**. If you do seek advice from a doctor or nurse, make sure you tell them about your vaccination (show them the vaccination card) so that they can assess you properly.



When is the best time during pregnancy to have the COVID-19 vaccination?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are an independent expert advisory committee that advises UK health departments on immunisation. The JCVI recommend that pregnant women have their COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible – there is no need to wait until after giving birth.

The first dose of COVID-19 vaccine will give good protection, but you need to get each dose on time for the best possible protection. You should have your second dose 8 to 12 weeks after your first dose. If you have delayed your vaccination for any reason, have your vaccinations as soon as possible.

I am pregnant and have underlying immune problems. Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect the immune system of a person who is pregnant?

If you are pregnant and have underlying clinical conditions, you are at higher risk of suffering serious complications from COVID-19. It is therefore important that you are protected with all your vaccine doses to keep you and your baby safe.



I've just had a baby

Can I have the COVID-19 vaccine if I am breastfeeding?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are an independent expert advisory committee that advises UK health departments on immunisation. The JCVI has said that the vaccines can be given whilst breastfeeding. This is in line with recommendations from the USA and the World Health Organization. You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccines, and you cannot pass it to your baby through your breast milk.





If I feel poorly after having the vaccine, is it safe to take paracetamol if I am breastfeeding?

Paracetamol is generally considered safe to take as a painkiller when you are breastfeeding. However, you may want to check with your doctor first if your baby was born prematurely or has a specific medical condition.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect my fertility?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on fertility or your chances of becoming pregnant.

I'm worried about having a 'limp arm' after having the vaccine, and how I'm going to hold or breastfeed my baby.

A very common side effect after getting the COVID-19 vaccine is having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection. This should only last a day or two, and although very common, not everyone will experience this side effect.

If you are able to take paracetamol (be careful other products may also contain paracetamol which may mean you take too much and exceed the recommended daily dose; always check the contents list) it is advised to take the recommended dose of paracetamol for pain relief.

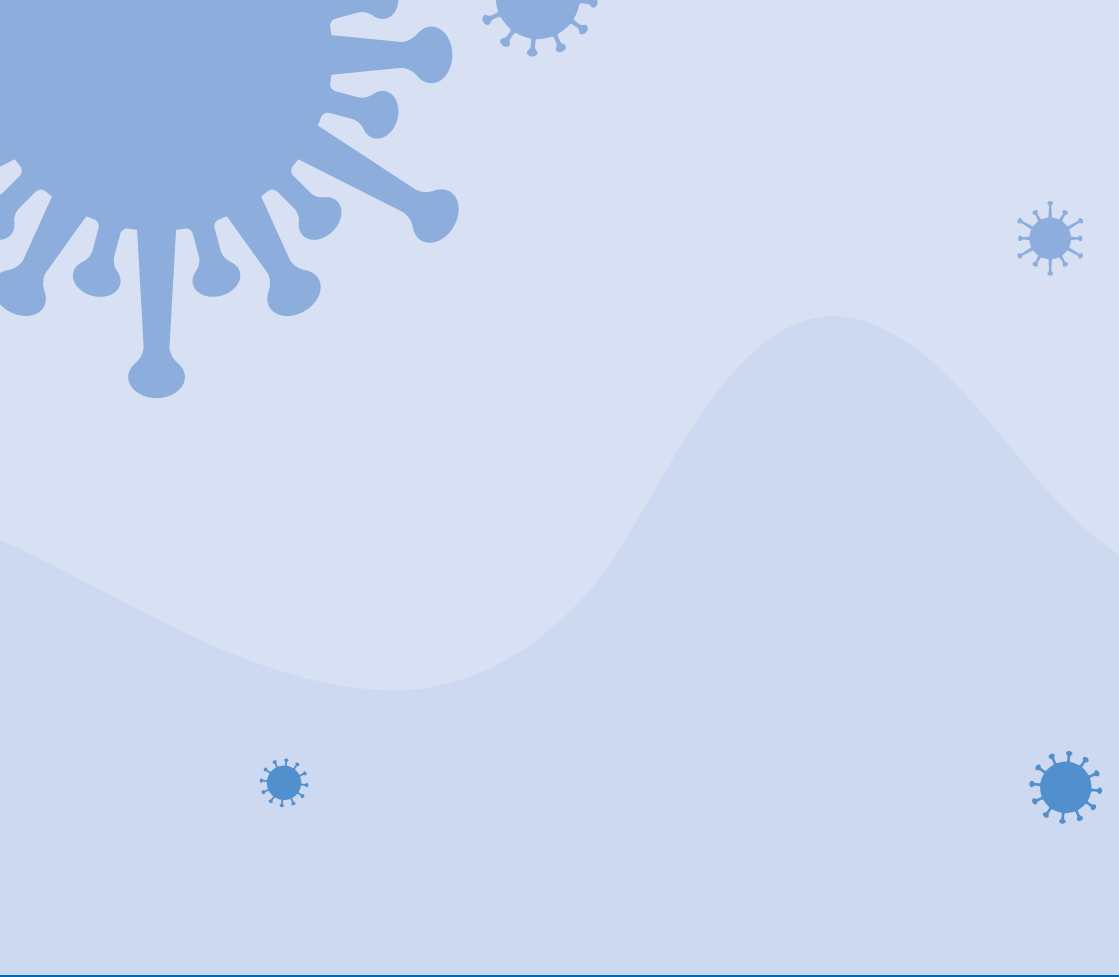


It's a struggle for me to travel with a newborn and my other young children. Is there any other way to get a vaccine aside from going to a vaccination centre?

The [National Booking Service](#) (booking into a vaccination centre or designated community pharmacy) provides the closest available appointment locations to you, aiming to minimise the time it will take for you to go and get the vaccine. There are a range of options, including [local walk-in centres](#) and mobile vaccination clinics.

Under certain circumstances, you may be offered your vaccine doses through your GP practice or local Hospital Hub (based in local hospitals with NHS providers vaccinating on site). If you have had your first dose through a GP service, you should be invited for your second dose through the same GP service. If you had your first dose at a Hospital Hub site, you should be invited or be able to book your second dose at the same location.





If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, please contact us at ssotics.comms@nhs.net.

