

Vaccinations Public Meeting Q&A

Below is a list of questions from the Vaccinations Public Meeting that have been answered by Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council's Public Health team. These will continue to be updated.

How are you prioritising people for the vaccine?

We are providing vaccines to the [key priority groups as identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#).

We continue to vaccinate:

- residents and staff in care homes for older people
- people 70 and over, and frontline health and social care staff. We are just starting to vaccinate housebound people over 80 as only the AstraZeneca vaccine can be transported to homes

We are contacting people from these groups directly to invite them for their vaccine. Please wait to be invited and **don't contact us to seek a vaccine**. If you are over 70 and have not yet been invited for your first vaccine then now is the time to contact your GP.

Important: The vaccine only provides protection if you are vaccinated; and we won't be able to vaccinate all at-risk groups until at least Spring 2021.

Who should I contact to get my vaccine?

We are contacting people from these priority groups directly to invite them for their vaccine. Please wait to be invited and **don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine**. If you are over 70 and have not yet been invited for your first vaccine, then now is the time to contact your GP.

How will I be contacted?

The NHS are contacting people by telephone, with follow-up text messages and letters. We try at least three times by telephone before a text or letter is sent.

When can I expect to receive my vaccine?

By the end of January, the NHS will have offered a first vaccine to everyone aged 80 and above. We will also have offered vaccines in almost all our care homes to staff and residents. Our roving vaccination teams have also started to vaccinate housebound people with the AstraZeneca vaccine. We are aiming to offer the vaccine to all over-70s, everyone who is classified as clinically extremely vulnerable, and all frontline health and social care staff by the end of February.

When is the Hawkey Hall vaccination centre in Woodford Green open?

None of our local vaccination centres are currently open every day. Appointments are planned and delivered in line with vaccine delivery dates and we maximise our appointments on the days they are open. However, we recognise that we need to improve the way this is communicated with residents, especially those living nearby.

Why don't you publish opening times of the vaccination centres?

When people are given their appointment, they will be informed of where they should attend. Vaccine is only available to certain people and we are vaccinating in different locations at different times at short notice. Publishing lists would be both resource intensive and potentially confusing.

I wasn't able to attend my vaccine appointment as I was not well. Have I missed my chance?

All those eligible will be invited to attend for a vaccination. If you are not able to attend when first invited, this will be logged and you will be contacted again to invite you to a future clinic.

I got a letter inviting me to book an appointment at the Excel Centre. But I don't want to travel.

NHS England has opened large scale vaccination centres. The nearest to Redbridge is the Excel centre in Newham. Letters are being sent out to patients inviting them to book appointments online at these sites. If you don't wish to travel to the Excel centre, you can ignore the letter and you will be offered an alternative, which will be at your local vaccination centre.

Which vaccine are you using?

Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines are now available. Both vaccines have been shown to be safe and offer high levels of protection, and have been given regulatory approval by the MHRA ([The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#)).

How will I know which vaccine I am given?

You will be told which vaccine you receive at your appointment. Details will also have been recorded on a vaccination card that is given to you, together with an information leaflet, at your appointment.

I did not receive a vaccination card – so how will the NHS know which vaccine I had?

We are aware that some clinics did run out of vaccination cards during clinics. We are sorry if this has caused concern, but can assure patients that their vaccine details are being added to

their medical record to ensure their GP has this information. It will also be used when booking your second dose appointment.

When will I be contacted for my 2nd dose appointment?

Your GP may book you in when you have your first dose or you may be asked to wait and be contacted. The second dose must be given at the same place as the first.

Will there be enough vaccine to provide 2nd doses if you are vaccinating more people in a few weeks time?

Yes. The NHS is carefully planning its vaccination programme and that includes ensuring we plan for patients' second dose appointments.

How do people know if they are on the Government's Vulnerable lists?

The Government has [published information](#) explaining who may be at higher risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable). If you're at high risk from coronavirus, you should have received a letter from the NHS. Speak to your GP or hospital care team if you have not been contacted and think you should have been.

My father is housebound. Can he be visited at home for his vaccinations?

Yes, we have now started a housebound home visiting service. If you are over 80 and have not been contacted, please speak to your GP practice and make sure you are on the housebound service list.

My mum is currently living with me but is not registered at a local GP practice, she just turned 71. Would she get the vaccine?

Please talk to your GP practice about the possibility of registering your relative as a temporary patient.

My GP practice is in Redbridge, but we live in the Epping Forest District Council area. Where can I have my vaccination?

When it is your turn, your GP practice will contact you with details of where you can have your vaccine. You will also be able to book at the large-scale vaccination centres

When should the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable group expect to start getting their vaccines?

The NHS are now inviting people aged 70 and over and people who are clinically extremely vulnerable (as defined by the Joint Committee of Vaccinations and Immunisation). But please wait to be contacted by the NHS, we cannot vaccinate everyone at the same time.

Is there a timescale for 16-64 year olds with underlying health conditions to receive the first vaccination?

We are now inviting people aged 70 and over and people who are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) (as defined by the Joint Committee of Vaccinations and Immunisation). But please wait to be contacted by the NHS, we cannot vaccinate everyone at the same time.

The NHS will make announcements in social media and the local media, and update our webpage COVID-19 Vaccination programme | East London Health & Care Partnership (www.eastlondonhcp.nhs.uk) when we start vaccinating other priority groups and provide advice on what to do if you have not yet been invited.

As we move through the priority groups we are likely to ask anyone in earlier priority groups who has not been offered a first vaccine to come forward.

How much information is given to people before they are vaccinated? i.e. are they making an informed choice?

As well as providing information online, residents can ask questions when they are contacted by telephone to book an appointment.

- [Pfizer patient information leaflet](#)
- [Astra Zeneca information leaflet](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination patient leaflet](#)
- Patient leaflets on [what to expect after your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
- There are [government leaflets available here](#)

We are working to make sure that everyone has access to the vaccine and anyone who wants it will be given plenty of opportunity to access the vaccine either when first invited or at a later date.

Over the coming months as the vaccine becomes more widely available people will be able to book a vaccine appointment at a variety of locations once their cohort becomes eligible. However, if you delay having the vaccine when it is offered, you are delaying the protection it gives you.

Do recipients need to give signed consent?

The Covid-19 vaccination is not compulsory. People will be offered vaccinations in line with recommendations from the JCVI. The NHS will contact people when it is their turn. People will need an appointment to get their vaccine

When booking an appointment online, you will be asked to complete a consent form and take a copy of this with you to your appointment.

Are medical records being accessed before the vaccine is given to check for and avoid possible allergic reactions ?

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 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine should not be given to those who have experienced anaphylaxis to the first dose of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccination.

Everybody will also be screened for potential allergic reactions before getting vaccinated. All vaccinators will have the training they need to deal with any rare cases of adverse reactions, and all venues will be equipped to care for people who need it – just like with any other vaccine.

We also advise patients with known allergies or reactions to make sure they read the available information and speak to their own GP or the healthcare professional at the vaccination centre if they have any concerns.

And, have all vaccination centres got emergency facilities to cope in case of a severe reaction?

There are trained medical professionals on site at every vaccination centre. Vaccinators will either be existing NHS staff or those recruited by the NHS specifically for the programme – including those who signed up to the NHS Bring Back scheme. There are a number of roles within the vaccination programme and these will require different levels of qualifications and experience.

Public Health England (PHE) and Health Education England (HEE) have compiled comprehensive training that includes anaphylaxis and basic life support training, injection administration, training on vaccines in general and the specific ones that will be used. Importantly new vaccinators will be supervised and assessed by senior clinicians to ensure both their safety and of course the safety of the people they are vaccinating – just like any other vaccinator.

A question has been raised about whether there will be arrangements made to vaccinate people who are unable for either physical or mental health reasons to go to a vaccination hub or GP surgery to have the vaccination.

Yes. In North East London, we are on track to complete all patients who wish to have vaccine in the 4 priority cohorts by 15 February. Housebound people are likely to be registered as clinically extremely vulnerable or over 70 years of age and therefore part of the priority groups.

Home visits for those who are housebound or unable to leave their homes started in late January, after local teams received the guidance from NHSE on how to safely manage mobile vaccinations. The programme has begun in Redbridge and is progressing well.

The vaccination team is currently contacting those patients who have their housebound status on their patient record. If a person aged over 70, who needs a home visit, has not yet been contacted by the NHS for a vaccination appointment, they or their carer can now contact their GP.

We ask patients and carers of those who require a home visit as they are housebound or unable to attend a local centre to contact their GP and make sure they are registered on the home visiting list.

Some residents do not have transport or because they are elderly/vulnerable/ isolated may not be able to get to the vaccination centre. Are there any transport facilities being made available for such residents?

People who are housebound will be contacted by their GP services about alternative ways to get vaccinated. People can also wait until more locations closer to where they live become available. The NHS will follow up with people that haven't booked their appointment, as a reminder.

We ask patients and carers of those who require a home visit as they are housebound or unable to attend a local centre to contact their GP and make sure they are registered on the home visiting list.

If you are in a particular age category that has been vaccinated according to the news/ press etc and have not received your vaccine or notification of vaccine yet should you contact your GP?

If you are over 70 and haven't yet been invited for your first Covid vaccine, you can now book by visiting www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or ringing 119 for free. You no longer need a letter. We ask everyone else to please wait to be contacted by the NHS.

Why am I being sent to another borough for my vaccination?

While we can't comment on an individual case without further investigation, residents should be offered appointments at their nearest vaccination centre.

People aged over 70 can now book online without receiving a letter. That means they are able to book at a number of local vaccine services. This includes pharmacies (including Mayor's Pharmacy in Snakes Lane, Woodford Green) and the large-scale vaccination centres.

Could you provide a list of ingredients please?

The vaccines do not contain any meat derivatives or porcine products or material of foetal or animal origin. A detailed review of the vaccines and their ingredients have been provided by the MHRA and can be found at the following links:

[For the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine information is available here.](#)

[For the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine information is available here.](#)

The British Islamic Medical Association have produced a [helpful guide for the Muslim community](#) which can be found here.

The Pope has said that it's "morally acceptable" to receive a vaccination for COVID-19. [You can read the full announcement here.](#)

What special measures are being planned or put in place to combat spread of misinformation and improve uptake among BAME communities?

Some communities have specific concerns and may be more hesitant in taking the vaccine than others. The Council and the NHS are working collaboratively with partners to ensure vaccine messages reaches as diverse an audience as possible and are tailored to meet their needs.

This includes engagement with community and faith-led groups, charities, social care staff and other voluntary organisations. In Redbridge, the NHS is working closely with the Council and those in the community to listen to the concerns of local people about the vaccine.

Information has been provided in a number of community languages and we welcome the help of anyone who can share information that address people's questions and help residents make an informed choice about getting the vaccine.

The Council also send regular vaccination updates and resources to Community Leaders and Community Ambassadors so these can be shared with their communities.

How are you tackling vaccine hesitancy from specific communities? Can you have people filmed speaking in their own language when taking the vaccines to counter myths about what it contains or that it shouldn't be taken.

The Council and its health partners, CCG and BHRUT, have been sharing translated videos regarding vaccine safety and what the vaccine contains in common languages in the borough including Hindi, Gujarati, Romanian, Polish, Bengali, Urdu and Punjabi. [Please find some of these videos here.](#)

BHRUT have also shared videos from senior BAME staff talking about how to approach vaccine hesitancy in Asian and Black communities. They have also shared a video from the fertility lead talking about vaccines and fertility. [Please find these videos here.](#)

Are there any known or anticipated 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 you do have symptoms after the first dose, you still need to have the second dose. 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
- As with all vaccines, appropriate treatment and care will be available in case of a rare anaphylactic event following administration.

Some vaccines take many years to test for safety, how do we know that these vaccines are safe when they have come to fruition in a matter of months?

The trials to support the use of previous vaccines have taken time because of the time to recruit sufficient people to take part and the funds to conduct the trials. This pandemic meant that all research and government funders were keen to fund and all did so together at the same time. This meant that there was a lot of funding available. At the same time enormous numbers of people volunteered to take part, far more than usual times. This combination has meant that very large studies (larger than most previous vaccine studies) were able to take place. This meant that the study periods could be shorter because more people started from the beginning instead of waiting for many many months to have got just about enough. The size of the study increases the power of the study, you can rely on the results more confidently.

The Covid-19 vaccines have all gone through all the usual stages of trials but more quickly and more powerfully than usual. The studies have all looked at effectiveness and side effects and for the same length of time in most volunteers as they would have done in the past.

Will the vaccine cause problems in women of childbearing age e.g. fertility issues?

The BHRUT Consultant Gynaecologist and lead for fertility [explains](#) that the COVID-19 vaccine does not affect fertility.

[The RCOG and the RCM also respond to misinformation around the Covid-19 vaccine and fertility.](#) Dr Edward Morris, President at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, has said: "We want to reassure women that there is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 vaccines will affect fertility. Claims of any effect of Covid-19 vaccination on fertility are speculative and not supported by any data. There is no biologically plausible mechanism by which current vaccines would cause any impact on women's fertility. Evidence has not been presented that women who have been vaccinated have gone on to have fertility problems."

Once I've been vaccinated do I have to follow the guidance or can I start meeting with friends and family?

It is vital that everyone follows the national guidance. While the vaccine will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill it does not give 100% protection and we do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus, so it is still important to follow the guidance in your local area to protect those around you. National guidance will continue to be reviewed by the Government and updated when appropriate.