

# Covid-19 Vaccination

## Information for prisons and courts

Your questions answered... There has been a lot of information in the news about vaccinations to protect against a virus called Coronavirus / Covid-19.

Having questions about vaccines is very normal – and it's okay to ask questions. Inside this booklet are real questions asked by residents in prison and answered by healthcare experts. There is also a radio programme and a film available in prisons broadcast on prison radio and prison TV.

This guide will help you understand more about the vaccination programme in your prison. Remember it is okay to ask

## What's inside?

1. Taking the vaccine.
2. Side effects & safety.
3. Covid vaccines in prison.
4. Covid after the vaccine.

Tune in to National Prison Radio and WayOut TV for an audio/video version of this booklet.



# 1. Taking the vaccine

## What is a vaccine and how does it work?

A vaccine is a treatment developed by scientists which is given by means of an injection to enable your body to develop antibodies. Covid-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes Covid-19 without us having to get the illness.

## How will I know when I can get the vaccine?

When it is your turn to be offered the vaccination, you will be contacted by Healthcare and be given a letter a few days prior to vaccination day.

## What's inside the vaccine? Is the vaccine changing DNA?

The vaccines do not alter your DNA. They comprise mRNA (Messenger Ribonucleic Acid) giving the body instructions on how to make proteins on the surface of the virus. This does not alter your DNA but teaches your body an immune response to Covid-19 in case you are exposed.

## What is the process of getting the jab like?

You will be escorted to a cubicle and asked to sit down and roll up your sleeve. The Healthcare team will collect your consent form and check your prison ID card. They will then administer the vaccination to your upper arm.

## Following the initial vaccination, you will receive a second dose of the same vaccination 12 weeks later?

You will receive a second dose of the vaccination 12 weeks after your first dose. This will be arranged by the Healthcare Team in your prison, please make sure you attend your appointment.

## **What vaccine are we getting?**

From June all prisoners under the age of 40 and all new receptions will be offered the Moderna vaccine instead of the AstraZeneca. AZ will still be given as a 2nd dose to anyone who has already had their 1st dose of this.

## **Does the Covid-19 vaccine work?**

Yes, the vaccine is highly effective, but to get full protection people need to come back for the second dose – this is important. Full protection kicks in around a week or two after that second dose, which is why it is also important to attend your second appointment when invited.

## **Do I need a vaccination if I have had Covid-19?**

Yes, you still need the vaccine even if you have had Covid-19. Reinfection is still possible if you have had it once, and experts do not know how long someone is immune from getting sick again. You will need to wait 28 days from your positive Covid-19 test result before you can receive your

## **Will the vaccine make me test positive for Covid-19 or give me Covid-19?**

The vaccine does not contain any part of the Covid-19 virus (dead or alive) but comprises mRNA, which gives instructions to your cells on how to make a “spike protein”. You cannot catch Covid-19 from the vaccine.

## **Why is it important to take the vaccine?**

It helps protect you and others from the Covid-19 virus. Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases. By taking the vaccine you could save a life.

## **If I get vaccinated, do I still need a Covid-19 test and still be required to isolate if I have symptoms?**

Yes, we will continue to isolate and test people who become symptomatic for the time being.

## 2. Side effects & safety

### What are the side effects of getting the vaccine?

Like all medicines, this vaccine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. Some possible side effects may be tenderness, pain, warmth, itching or bruising where the injection is given, generally feeling unwell, feeling tired (fatigue), chills or feeling feverish, headache, feeling sick (nausea), joint pain or muscle ache. The vaccine will not make you sterile, however there is evidence that the Covid-19 virus could.

### How long do the side effects last for after having the vaccine?

In clinical studies with the vaccine, most side effects were mild to moderate in nature and resolved within a few days.

### Is the vaccine safe for ethnic minorities?

The vaccines available have all been tested with ethnic minority groups. For the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine 10.1% of trial recipients were Black and 3.5% Asian. There is no evidence either of the vaccines will work differently in different ethnic groups.

All vaccines, Moderna vaccine and AstraZeneca vaccine have been shown to be safe and offer high levels of protection, and they have been given regulatory approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) following tests on safety and efficacy.

### Is the vaccine halal?

Vaccine manufacturers have stated the vaccine does not contain any animal ingredients and no animal-derived cells were used.

## How has the vaccine been produced so fast?

Any Coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) follows international standards of safety. They conduct “rolling reviews” of data from vaccine trials. This means rather than waiting until the end of the clinical trial to assess the data, experts are assessing it instead on a rolling basis during the trial, which has helped speed up the approval process.

## 3. Covid Vaccines in prison

### Are prisoners getting the vaccine in line with community guidelines?

ALL residents will be offered the opportunity to have the Covid-19 vaccination. The vaccination roll out has been predefined by the Government into several stages and prisons will be mirroring these stages.

### How will residents prove they have had a vaccination to outside services?

When you have had the vaccine, your medical records will be updated and can be used as evidence to outside services of your vaccination status. You will also be given a vaccination card showing when you had your first dose of the vaccine.

### I am being extradited soon so will I be eligible for vaccine? What happens if I am extradited or move prison between the two jabs?

Yes, you are eligible and will be given the first vaccination at this prison. You will be given your vaccination card which you need to present to your next prison/or to your GP when you arrive at your destination in order that you can be booked for your second vaccination.

## **What do you do if you are homeless and have no GP when released?**

You will be vaccinated at this prison and given your vaccination card. We try to ensure that every prison leaver is registered with a GP. If this is not possible you will be able to present your vaccination card at a GP surgery and they will arrange for you to have the second vaccination.

## **2. Covid after vaccination**

### **How long does the vaccine last for? If you have had the vaccine, do you have to get it again?**

The vaccines are expected to work for at least a year – if not longer. This will be constantly monitored.

### **Do I still need to wear a mask if I have been vaccinated?**

Yes, if your prison asks you to wear a face covering or make then please continue to do so. We will still need to wear masks, social distance and maintain good hand hygiene until scientists can assess how well the vaccine works in real-world conditions.

### **Can you catch Covid-19 from a vaccinated person and is it dangerous for a vaccinated person to come into contact with an infection person or persons?**

It's possible, but quite unlikely, to catch Covid-19 from a vaccinated person. No vaccine is ever 100% effective and until everyone has received 2 doses of the vaccination, they are still able to contract the virus. However, the more people that are vaccinated, the less likely this will be.

### **Is the vaccine slowing things down yet?**

Yes, there is evidence of this. The latest information is available at the daily Coronavirus Downing Street press conferences.

## **If you have had the Covid-19 vaccine, can you get Covid again?**

As above, no vaccine is 100% effective and there will be a very small percentage of people who may be reinfected with Covid-19 following vaccination. However, the vaccine gives a high percentage of protection against complications and is very effective at preventing people becoming seriously unwell if they are infected after being vaccinated. Also, the clinical trials have found that the vaccine is 100% effective in preventing hospitalisation and death.

## **If I refuse the vaccine now, can I get it at a later date?**

Yes, absolutely. If you decline, you will be re-offered the vaccine. If you still decline, but decide at a later date that you would like the vaccination, you just need to complete a healthcare application – either on the kiosk or on a paper form – stating that you would like to be vaccinated and you'll be booked into a clinic.

## **Will the vaccine eventually be made mandatory?**

That's impossible to answer at this stage. It's unlikely, as it would be seen as an infringement on human rights to forcibly vaccinate anybody against their will. However, it may be a requirement for travel, entry into events, or even for future employment.

## **Where can I find out more?**

Support is available if you have any other questions about the Covid-19 vaccination programme in prison.



You can talk to prison staff on your block, wing or landing.

You can talk to healthcare staff.



You can hear more information via prison radio.

You can watch video on prison TV and waiting area screens.

# Covid-19 Questions

## What is Covid -19?

Covid-19 (Coronavirus disease) is an infectious disease, which spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus that causes Covid-19 is able to spread when an infected person is in close contact with another person, but can also be transmitted on surfaces.

## What are the signs / symptoms of Covid-19?

The main symptoms of Covid-19 are:

***A high temperature***

***A new, continuous cough***

***A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste***

Most people with Covid-19 will have at least 1 of these symptoms. If you experience any of these symptoms, please inform staff immediately.

## How can I protect myself from Covid-19?

Our best defence is to be vigilant and to follow the mantra “hands, face, space”.

## How to help prevent the spread of Covid

