**Covid Vaccine – Your Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. How does the Covid vaccine work?**

Most vaccines work by triggering an immune response from a weakened or inactive germ that causes the disease. The Covid vaccine works by giving our body a set of instructions to make a harmless “spike protein” which will create the antibodies and cells required to fight off coronavirus. As there is no whole or live virus involved, the vaccine cannot cause disease.

**2. Why do we need a vaccine for Covid?**

There are no drugs known to prevent or cure Covid 19. A few drugs have been found to reduce the death rate from Covid, but only a vaccine can prevent people catching the disease and being ill from it.

**3. How effective is the Covid vaccine?**

The vaccine is around 95% effective. This means that more than 9 people out of 10 will be prevented from catching Covid if they are vaccinated. This vaccine is more effective than the flu vaccine which is around 70% effective.

**4. The Covid vaccine has been developed very quickly. Is it safe?**

Most vaccines take some years to develop. The reason the Covid vaccine has been developed quickly is because:

* The researchers already had experience with developing similar vaccines
* Funding (which is normally a barrier) has been readily available
* Multiple teams were working on different parts of the development at the same time

All the normal safety checks have been completed on the Covid vaccine - they were just done at great speed.

**5. Will everyone receive the Covid vaccine?**

The vaccine will be given to people at highest risk of Covid first.

The priority groups (in order) are:

* Residents and staff in care homes for older people
* ≥ 80 years and health and social care staff
* ≥ 75 years
* ≥ 70 years and the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable groups
* ≥ 65 years
* 16 – 65 years in at- risk groups (those usually eligible for the flu vaccine)
* ≥ 60 years then ≥ 55 years then ≥ 50 years

**6. Are there any people who cannot have the Covid vaccine?**

* Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to the Covid vaccine
* Pregnant and breastfeeding (but research trials starting in 2021)
* Under 16s (but research trials starting in 2021)
* Within 7 days of receiving another vaccine
* Acute feverish illness
* Within 4 weeks of a Covid type illness

**7. Are there any side effects to the Covid vaccine?**

The side effects are mild-moderate and only last a few days. Common side effects include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SIDE EFFECT (usually last a few days) | NUMBERS OF PEOPLE AFFECTED |
| Mild pain at injection site | 8 out of 10 |
| Tiredness | 6 out of 10 |
| Headache | 5 out of 10 |
| Chills and muscle pain | 3 out of 10 |
| Joint pains | 2 out of 10 |
| Fever | 1 out of 10 |
| Swollen glands | Less than 1 out of 10 |

**8. Will I have to self-isolate if I have a fever after the Covid vaccine?**

No – if you have a fever within the first two days of having the vaccine, and you have no other symptoms of coronavirus, you do not need to self-isolate.

**9. How is the Covid vaccine given?**

It is usually given in to the muscle of the upper arm and a second dose is given either 21 or 28 days later (depending on the type of vaccine). You will not be fully protected until 7 days after your second dose.

**10. Do I still need the vaccine if I think I have had Covid 19?**

Yes – it is unknown what level of protection a previous infection can give you, so everyone is encouraged to have the vaccine

**11. Will I need a booster of the vaccine at a later stage?**

At this stage, boosters are not recommended. It is unclear how long vaccine immunity will last and this will become clearer with further trial data.

**12. Will having the vaccine mean I can travel and lead a normal life?**

There are no current plans for a Covid vaccine “passport” and normal rules of “hands/face/space” will still apply. This may change as more people get vaccinated and there are less infections present.