

INFORMATION FOR CARERS ON THE COVID-19 PFIZER VACCINATION FOR THEMSELVES

How does the new Pfizer vaccine work?

It is a man-made mRNA vaccine, which contains NO living material (i.e. no coronavirus material). mRNA is a section of the coronavirus genetic code which contains the instructions to build part of the virus. In this vaccine the instructions are for a special protein called a “spike protein” which is recognized by our immune system. Your body will recognize these instructions and begin making the coronavirus spike protein. This spike protein stimulates your immune system to produce a response to help protect you against future coronavirus infections.

Can the vaccine give you Covid-19?

No.

How long will it take for the Pfizer vaccine to work?

You will have a degree of protection approximately 2 weeks after the FIRST dose of the vaccine. The second dose will be given approximately 10-12 weeks after the first dose and will give you longer lasting protection. So it's important to continue following dose the infection prevention control advice at work and Hands/Face/Space elsewhere.

Who shouldn't have the Pfizer vaccines?

If you are pregnant or breast feeding you should discuss with your GP about the risks and benefits having the vaccine at present. For example if you are a front line worker and/or have a long term medical condition there may be good reasons why you have the vaccine now.

If in doubt you should do a pregnancy test from your local pharmacy.

Do NOT have the Pfizer Vaccine if you have had an allergic reaction to ANY vaccine in the past. Discuss the problem with the person doing the vaccination. People with minor allergic reactions, food intolerance or allergies to antibiotics and most other drugs are safe to have the vaccine. If in doubt discuss with the person undertaking the vaccination.

If you have extreme immunosuppression - for example taking specialist anticancer drugs or have HIV-you would need to discuss this with your doctors before immunisation.

The vaccine contains no egg products so is safe for people with allergies or reactions to egg.

Is the Pfizer vaccine safe if I'm on a medicine to thin my blood?

Yes. It is safe for people on anticoagulant drugs like Warfarin and other blood thinners including aspirin. If you are under the care of a haematologist with a “bleeding disorder” you should seek advice from your doctors before immunisation.

How effective is the Pfizer vaccine?

It is 95% effective in stopping people becoming ill from COVID-19. This is a very high figure-for example the annual flu vaccine only gives 40-60% protection and this is very effective at stopping influenza illness and deaths.

Can the vaccine affect my fertility?

No. There is no evidence that this is the case. This confusion is probably due to misinterpretation of the advice that pregnant and breast feeding women should seek advice before having the vaccine.

I've had Covid-19 already. Should I have the vaccine?

Yes. So long as you have got over the COVID-19 illness and your positive swab was at least 14 days ago. It is unknown how long the immunity lasts from having "natural" COVID-19. The vaccine is likely to improve and extend your immunity.

Can I get Covid-19 after the Pfizer Vaccine?

Yes - but your immune system will recognise it straight away and help prevent you becoming seriously ill and dying. It's thought that some people who catch the virus after immunisation can still pass the virus onto others -but in smaller amounts. This is why it is important to maintain safe practices work and at home even after immunisation.

Can I have the flu vaccine and the Pfizer Vaccine?

Yes. They just need to be 1 week apart.

I've got a long-term condition- is it safe for me to have the Pfizer vaccine?

Yes. Having a long-term condition makes it even more important that you have the vaccine to protect your health and it is safe for you to have the vaccine.

Why should I have the Pfizer vaccine?

It will protect you AND reduce the risk of you passing the virus on to vulnerable residents, visitors, work colleagues and your own family and friends

How has the Pfizer Vaccine been developed so quickly?

Huge amounts of money and effort, across the world, have been put into finding a solution. Normally it takes a lot of time to find funding and get ethical approval to develop new vaccines and medicines. Recruiting people to take part in studies that show safety and effectiveness (mainly the large "Phase 3") has been easy because so many people have volunteered across the globe. 40,000 people have been involved in the Pfizer vaccine study to show how safe and effective it is.

Should I be worried about the "New Variant" strain of Covid 19?

We know that this new strain has been around for some time. It passes more easily from person to person than the 'normal' strain so it's important to continue to take full precautions at work and at home to prevent spread. There is NO indication that it causes more severe disease than the 'normal' virus.

Will the Pfizer Vaccine work against the “New Variant” strain of Covid-19?

All virus tend to change with time. The good news is that the Corona virus that causes COVID-19 changes more slowly than other viruses such as Influenza. At this point we believe the Pfizer vaccine will protect against the “New Variant” strain.

What is herd immunity and why is it so important?

We know that when enough people are immune to a virus that it can no longer spread easily from person to person. When a virus is very contagious it requires fewer people who are unprotected to keep circulating around.

Herd immunity is when enough people are protected from the virus that there are not enough vulnerable people for the virus to jump from person to person.

So when we are dealing with a more contagious virus (like the New Variant) it even more important that as many of us as possible get protected by a vaccine

This is particularly important for those of us that are in contact with vulnerable individuals whose immune system can't protect them as well.