

## Myths & Truths About The Covid Vaccines

This document is designed to help dispel some of the rumours circulating around the Covid vaccines. This vaccination campaign is one of the most important in this generation and if successful, will save many millions of lives. We at Meadowcroft Surgery believe that it is unfair and unethical for you to make a decision about your health without knowing “both sides of the story”.

This document has been read and supported by all of the signatories at the bottom and is accurate (at the time of creation). Please feel free to share this with whomever you wish.

### 1. The vaccines were developed too quickly & so will not be safe – MYTH

The last major vaccines were developed many decades ago. Since then technology has meant that the scanning of data and the design of vaccines has sped up. Additionally, because of the worldwide impact of Covid, companies and governments have an interest in donating money to the search for vaccines so that world economies can try to return to normal as quick as possible. Covid vaccine trials have also seen huge numbers of people volunteer for the trials due to social media. Due to this, the time in which the vaccines have been designed has been shortened **but the clinical trials have taken place over the same amount of time as any other vaccine with many trials being run parallel (overlapping) to each other leading to data being available much quicker.**

### 2. The vaccine could give you Covid – MYTH

None of the vaccines already approved or even the ones still in trial phases are live vaccines. This means they cannot give you Covid (or even a mild form of Covid). The vaccines introduce a small **harmless** protein from the outside of the virus into the body and so teach the body to make this protein. Your immune system then recognises the protein as foreign and gets itself ready for when the real thing comes along. The vaccine protein injected disappears from your body after a few days (see also under point 4). This may mean that you get some minor side-effects (headache, arm ache, very mild temperature), **but this means that your immune system has reacted in the right way to the vaccine.** Please remember however, that not everyone will get these minor side-effects.

### 3. I'm young and healthy and so I am not at risk of Covid – MYTH

**Everyone is at risk from Covid.** We know that certain people (older or those with underlying health conditions) are at a higher risk, but the way Covid affects your body is random and still not fully understood. We have all heard the stories of 70 year old patients surviving and 30 year old healthy people dying or getting “Long Covid”. The fact is there is no way of knowing how you will be affected. People of any age can spread Covid and vaccinations will reduce the risk of spreading it to others who may be more vulnerable to it.

**Long Covid** is a set of symptoms which can cause fatigue, shortness of breath, palpitations and other symptoms long after you have fought off the virus. People of any age (including young fit people) can get this and it is a real risk even if you do not die from Covid itself.

**We do know that the BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) group are at higher risk of serious hospitalisation and death than other groups.** The reasons for this are not fully known but it is likely to be a mix of deprivation, genetics and other health conditions.

- **Males of Black African background** had the highest risk of death – **2.7 times higher** than White males
- **Black Caribbean females** were **2 times more** likely to die from Covid than White females
- **Bangladeshi males** were **1.9 times more** likely to die than White males
- **Black Caribbean males** were **1.7 times more** likely to die than White males
- **Pakistani males** were **1.6 times more** likely to die than White males

#### **4. Vaccines can “overload” your immune system – MYTH**

This is a common fear, especially from anti-vaccination groups. Your immune system is geared to coping with many different foreign proteins or microscopic invaders at once. When you eat a sandwich your intestine has to cope with many thousands of different proteins and microscopic invaders all at the same time. Societies around the world have safely immunised babies against several different bacteria and viruses all at the same time for many decades.

Multiple large scale studies have shown that immunisations to one virus or bacteria do **not** mean you will catch other ones more easily. In fact, immunisations forms memory cells in the blood so when the real infection comes along your body can fight it off much quicker than it would ordinarily. This means that it will either stop you getting very ill/dying from the infection **or** stop you getting it at all (and possibly passing it on to someone who may get more severe effects from it).

#### **5. There is a high risk of serious allergies to the vaccines – MYTH**

The vaccines are incredibly unlikely to cause a serious allergic reaction. During the consent process the vaccinators ensure that each person will be safe before they receive the vaccine. The people most likely to have allergic reactions are those with multiple or unknown anaphylactic (very serious) allergies – these patients usually need to carry an adrenaline pen with them at all times. **The chances of you having a severe reaction to a vaccine are 1 in 760,000 (you’re more likely to be struck by lightning (a 1 in 700,000 chance)).**

It is also safe for you to have the vaccines if you have penicillin or latex allergies as **there is no latex or penicillin in any of the vaccines.**

Please see this link for more information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

If you do carry an adrenaline pen and are concerned about allergic reactions or your suitability for the vaccines, please discuss this with one of your clinical team members.

## 6. Covid vaccines can affect fertility – **MYTH**

There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that any of the Covid vaccines can affect fertility. Dr Edward Morris (President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists) has said “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.”

**In fact some of the women who were involved in the trials became pregnant during them and they have gone on to give birth to healthy babies. During the Pfizer vaccine tests, 23 women volunteers involved in the study became pregnant, and the only one who suffered a pregnancy loss had not received the actual vaccine, but a placebo.**

You may ask why there were only 23 pregnant women – but this is because pregnant women are not actively recruited into tests **and this is for ethical reasons rather than anything else.**

## 7. I've already had Covid so I don't need the vaccine – **MYTH**

We know that with a lot of infectious diseases (like Covid), natural infection does not provide long-lasting immunity. Immunisations are better at providing immunity than natural infections because of booster doses.

**Think of it as revising for exams – you read the material at least twice and that's because the second time you read it, you remember it better. This is how the immune system provides long-lasting immunity.**

## 8. The vaccines will work straight away – **MYTH**

Although the vaccines will provide some good immunity, this takes time. This is because your body has to get its immune system ready.

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of your suffering from COVID-19 disease. There is some protection from 21 days after your first dose but the full benefit may not be seen until at least seven days after your second dose of the vaccine.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, **so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection.** Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe

We don't yet know whether it will stop people from catching and passing on the virus, but we do expect it to reduce this risk. So, it is still important that people continue to follow social distancing rules and precautions for the time being:

- Practise social distancing
- Wear a face mask

- Wash your hands carefully and frequently
- Follow the current guidance [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## 9. The Covid vaccines contain chips, foetal tissue or tracking devices – **MYTH**

These vaccines contain no foetal tissue, animal products or tracking chips. They do contain fats, salts and sugars – and these are there to protect the vaccine whilst in storage and while it works in your body. After the vaccine has done its job, it is cleared out by the body.

**This vaccine is vegan, vegetarian, Halal and Kosher friendly and there are likely more “nasty” chemicals in a takeaway, cigarette or even pre-packaged food like crisps than any vaccine. As of 02/02/21 – there have been 104 million doses injected and there is not one shred of evidence to say that the millions of healthcare professionals seeing these vaccines (they are all inspected before they are injected) have seen any chips or abnormal materials.**

## 10. Having your vaccines will help protect yourself, family and friends & ease restrictions quicker – **TRUTH**

This is a societal issue and so everyone has a responsibility to themselves, their family and the world to help get over this pandemic and having as much of the population vaccinated is our best chance at doing this.

Information about the 3 approved vaccines including their ingredients can be found here:

### **Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19>

### **Oxford/AstraZeneca**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>

### **Moderna**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-moderna>

## Leaflets from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

- [What to expect after your first COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [Why do I have to wait for my COVID-19 vaccination?](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination - A guide for older adults](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for women of childbearing age, pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: guide for healthcare workers](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination - a guide for social care staff leaflet](#)
- [Video Information in 14 different languages](#)

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