

19 Beaumont Street Surgery: FAQs on the Coronavirus Vaccine Programme, update March 2021

1. I want to have my vaccine booster at 3 weeks, not at 12 weeks.

We are strictly following the guidance of the JCVI (the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which is an independent expert advisory panel of the Department of Health). They have now advised delaying the booster dose from 3 weeks to 12 weeks, to allow a much greater proportion of the population to be immunised as soon as possible. During the coming weeks, therefore, we will be able to vaccinate double the number of people with their initial dose as a result of the decision to delay the booster to 12 weeks. (Whereas 'boosting' half the number of people at 3 weeks would likely confer on those individuals only a modest further benefit).

There is good evidence that a single dose of either of the currently available vaccines (Pfizer and Astra Zeneca) provides a high level of protection against severe disease. So, vaccinating a greater number of people with (at least to begin with) a *single* dose will prevent more deaths and hospitalisations than vaccinating a smaller number of people with two closely spaced doses.

2. Can you guarantee I will get my booster at 12 weeks, and that it will be the same brand?

While this is the current guidance, for the time being we cannot guarantee either case, and there is a chance it could change at short notice due to matters outside our control.

3. I want to choose one vaccine type over the other.

We are not able to offer a choice of brand, as we have no control over the vaccine type or quantity that we're provided with.

If you prefer not to receive the vaccine, we initially offer you, you can opt to wait to see if a subsequent delivery is your preferred type, but we would have no idea how long you might be waiting, and would not therefore advise this. We strongly encourage you to take the first vaccination appointment you are offered.

4. If I say no to the brand you are offering now will I lose my place in the queue?

No – anyone in the cohort that we are currently vaccinating, and those in 'earlier cohorts' but who were not previously vaccinated, will be invited again at the next delivery of vaccine if they let us know this is what they want.

5. I had a first dose of Pfizer somewhere else and want you to give me the booster?

Aside from exceptional circumstances, we are not able to do this. The guidance is that, as far as is possible, you should have your booster dose wherever you had your first vaccination. Pfizer vaccine deliveries are short notice, unpredictable – and its short shelf-life, once activated, means that we have only three days in which to use it. The chance of us having available vaccine in such a scenario, and at the right time for a particular person, is low.

6. I have had an invitation, but not my husband/wife who is younger than me – can you do them at the same time?

Generally, no: we need to stick strictly to the five-year age cohorts. The only exception would be if the other person were just a few months younger than the cohort – dependent on us having enough vaccine in that particular clinic.

7. How will I know about the appointment date and time for my booster dose?

We will be in touch nearer the time, if possible, by text or email, assuming we have your up-to-date contact details. We will call the landline for people that we do not have mobile or email details for. Unfortunately, we aren't able to book now because we won't know our vaccine delivery dates until much nearer the time.

8. I am frontline health and social care worker, Can I have a vaccine?

Yes: as long as your job title is within the definition in [Ch 14a of the Green Book, page 11.](#)

9. I have some reason why I think I am an exceptional case, and should be prioritised.

People will be called up by the strict JCVI cohorts – and you will automatically be invited when it is your cohort that is being vaccinated.

10. When I've had the vaccine, can I go back to life as normal and see my grandchildren? I'm really looking forward to that.

Unfortunately, you cannot go back to 'life as normal' yet, even though you've been vaccinated. For the time being, you must continue to follow strict social distancing and the current government guidance.

11. Does the vaccine stop me transmitting the virus?

While there is no definite evidence for this as yet, the experts are hopeful that it does, as many other vaccines *do* reduce transmission. However, for now, even once you have been vaccinated, it is very important to continue to follow strict social distancing advice.

12. I am registered at 19 Beaumont Street but currently not living in or near Oxford, how should I get vaccinated?

If possible, and in accordance with current government guidance, travelling long distances should be avoided. So, if you are in one of our active vaccination cohorts but not currently in Oxford, we would encourage you to either book at a local mass vaccination site via the [national booking service](#) or contact a GP practice nearer to where you are currently living and ask them to vaccinate you as an unregistered patient.

Alternatively, if you are currently residing in Oxford, but registered with a GP in another part of the country, then we would be delighted to vaccinate you as an unregistered patient if you are in one of the eligible cohort groups. Please contact us at practicemanager.nbs@nhs.net to make arrangements for this.

13. I am over 65 and am concerned that the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine might not be as effective for me.

The UK vaccination experts are confident that the Oxford AZ vaccine is effective in older adults. There is good laboratory data showing that the immune response to the vaccine is as good in older adults as it is in adults under 65. A [Scottish study](#) showed that both the Astra Zeneca and Pfizer vaccines significantly reduce the risk of hospitalisation after a single dose, including in those over 80.

14. I have heard that the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine may not be effective against the South African variant of covid-19.

It is possible that the Oxford AZ vaccine may not protect against mild-moderate disease caused by the South African variant of covid. It does appear to protect against severe disease. Importantly, the Oxford AZ vaccine does provide good protection against the majority of covid strains currently circulating in the UK. This is a rapidly evolving situation – we only have very limited data at present.

15. I am concerned about reports of blood clots after the Astra Zeneca Vaccine?

The UK regulator (MHRA) has rigorously reviewed all the available evidence on this and concluded that there is no increased risk of blood clots due to the Astra Zeneca vaccine. This is very reassuring and we would strongly encourage you to take whichever brand of vaccine

you are offered at the first opportunity. The benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks. More information is available [here](#).

16. I would like a letter providing proof I have been vaccinated.

The card you are given at the time of your vaccine is proof you have been vaccinated. There is not any other system or NHS funding or for us to provide further documentation. If you require a signed letter from us confirming you have been vaccinated there will be a £20 charge. Please email practicemanager.nbs@nhs.net

17. I have had a covid antibody test since my vaccination and I do not have any antibodies. Does this mean I have not responded to the vaccine?

The standard antibody tests do not detect whether or not you have responded to the vaccine. A negative antibody test does NOT mean you haven't responded to the vaccine.

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