COVID-19 vaccination

A guide for people in Gibraltar



This leaflet has been produced by the Gibraltar Health Authority to help explain the Covid-19 vaccination which will help protect you against the virus.

COVID-19 immunisation
Enjoy life. Protect yourself.

What is COVID-19?

Covid-19 is caused by a new virus called a SARS-Cov-2. It is part of a group of viruses called coronaviruses.

The virus was first identified in late 2019. The virus is very infectious and can lead to serious illness in some people.

Many people who are infected may not have any symptoms at all or only have mild symptoms. Symptoms commonly include a cough, fever, headache, and loss of taste/smell.

Some people may also feel very tired, have aching muscles, a sore throat, diarrhoea and vomiting or confusion. A small number of people become seriously ill and require hospital care, possibly including admission to Intensive Care. Sadly, some people die from Covid-19.

Overall fewer than 1 in 100 people who are infected will die from COVID-19, but in those over 75 years of age this rises to 1 in 10.

There is no cure for COVID-19 although some newly tested treatments do help to reduce the risk of complications.

About the Covid-19 vaccine

At the moment, there are two different vaccines available that can be used in Gibraltar, the Pfizer BioNTech and the AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine. Both vaccines require two doses to be given to provide the best protection.

Who should have the vaccine?

Covid-19 can affect anyone. The GHA are working to ensure that as many adults as possible receive the vaccine.

We will be giving the vaccine initially to those at highest risk from catching the disease or of suffering serious complications if they catch the disease.

This includes older people ERS residents, front line health and care workers and those with certain clinical conditions that make them vulnerable. Once these people



have been vaccinated we will start to vaccinate other groups in the population on a risk basis.

Who cannot have the vaccine?

The vaccines do not contain any living organism and are safe for the vast majority of people including those with disorders of the immune system. A small number of people may be ineligible for vaccination including some people who have severe allergic reactions to medicines or vaccines.

Women who are pregnant, or planning a pregnancy within a few months or breastfeeding should seek advice before being vaccinated.

Warnings and precautions:

- If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) after any other vaccine injections;
- If you currently have a severe infection with a high temperature (over 38°C).
  Note, a mild fever or infection, like a cold, are not reasons to delay vaccination;

- If you have a problem with bleeding or bruising, or if you are taking a blood thinning medicine (anticoagulant);
- If your immune system does not work properly (immunodeficiency) or you are taking medicines that weaken the immune system (such as high-dose corticosteroids immunosuppressant or cancer medicines).

Will the vaccine protect me?

The vaccine will reduce the chances of you suffering from Covid-19. It may take a few weeks for your body to build up protection though.

The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies. At the time of publishing, in the UK 1.3million people have had a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.



Like all medicines, no vaccine is 100% effective. A small number of people may get Covid-19 despite having the vaccination but this disease should be less severe.

Will the vaccine have side effects?

Like many medicines, vaccines can cause side-effects. Most of these are mild and short-term and not everyone gets them. Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose you still need the second dose to get the best protection against the virus.

Very common side effects include:

- Having a painful, heavy feeling in your arm where you had the injection. This tends to be worst around 1-2 days after you receive the vaccine. Feeling tired,
- headaches, general aches, or mild flu like symptoms are not uncommon for 2-3 days.
- You should rest and take paracetamol, following guidance on the packaging, to help you feel better.



- Symptoms following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms worsen or develop a high temperature or you are concerned call 111.

Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise until after you have been vaccinated

The most common symptoms of Covid-19 are a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of or change in your normal sense of taste or smell.

If you have the above symptoms, please stay at home and call 111

What do I do next?

After you have had your first dose of the vaccine, you will be contacted and given an appointment for your second vaccination. It is important to have both doses of the vaccine for maximum protection.

You will be given a vaccination card. Please keep this safe.

What should I do if I am not well when it is my next appointment

If you are unwell you should wait until you have recovered to have your second vaccination, but you should have it as close as possible to the date you were given. You must not attend for your second vaccination if you are self-isolating or waiting for a Covid-19 test or you feel unwell.

Can I give COVID-19 to anyone, after I have had the vaccine?

The vaccine protects you from being seriously ill. We cannot yet say for certain whether or not you are still able to pass the virus on to others.

To protect yourself and your family you still need to:

- practice physical distancing
- keep your social bubbles small
- wear a face mask when advised
- wash your hands carefully and frequently

follow the latest GHA and Government guidance and advice

If you need more information on the Covid-19 vaccination please visit: www.covid.gi

Remember

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

