

Common myths about the COVID-19 vaccines – information for practice staff

There has been high uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines among dental practice staff within Yorkshire and Humber. However, some staff are hesitant about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines. We have prepared a short leaflet to address the most common concerns. Additional sources of information are available at the end of this leaflet.

If you have family, friends or patients who have concerns about the vaccine, we encourage you to discuss and support them to decide. However, it is important to offer factual information such as this leaflet and be non-judgmental in your approach.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) reassured people that there is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine affects future fertility or chances of conceiving a child. There is no biologically plausible mechanism by which current vaccines would cause any impact on women's fertility.

Does the vaccine contain any ingredients that are Haram? What if my appointment is during Ramadan?

The vaccines contain no animal ingredients at all. The British Islamic Medical Association and the Muslim Council of Britain have both agreed that the vaccine is halal, and that having the vaccine does not break your fast during Ramadan.

What is the position of religious leaders about the COVID-19 vaccine?

All faith leaders in England, including imams, rabbis, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church of England have issued a joined statement in support of the vaccination. Furthermore, they encouraged people to get vaccinated as a religious duty towards their community. The vaccine contains no blood or blood fractions. For further details please visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-and-vaccination>

I am worried about what is in the vaccine. Does it contain animal products / eggs / placental or stem cells / alcohol?

The full ingredients list is available for both the Pfizer/BioNTech and University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines. They contain no animal products or human cells. The main ingredients are the active vaccine preservatives, salts, stabilisers and water.

I have already had COVID-19, does this not make me immune to the virus?

We do not know how long immunity to COVID-19 lasts, but a small number of people have caught COVID-19 more than once. The vaccine is designed to give you the best chance for immunity in the longer term, so we still recommend this. However, you must wait for 4 weeks after your COVID-19 symptoms started before having the vaccine. If you have ongoing complications from COVID-19, you should discuss whether to have the vaccine with a clinician.

Does the Oxford / Astra Zeneca vaccine cause blood-clotting conditions?

The European Medicines Agency reviewed recent concerns about certain rare blood clotting conditions relating to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and concluded that there is no link between blood clotting and the vaccination.

Does the vaccine cause severe / irreversible side effects?

The COVID-19 vaccine is known to have some common minor side effects, but these are quite mild and do not last very long. Some of these could include:

- A sore arm near the vaccination site
- Tiredness
- Headache or more generalized body aching
- Flu-like symptoms

These side effects must be weighed against the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

If I have my vaccine, can I still infect other people with COVID-19?

The vaccine reduces your risk of catching the virus and will make you much less likely to be severely ill. However, there is still a chance that you can catch or spread the virus after your vaccine. You should therefore continue to follow social distancing guidance and wear appropriate PPE at work.

If you would like to book a vaccine, please use the following link to the NHS online booking system:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Additional information:

NHS coronavirus vaccine information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Royal College of Midwives statement on vaccines and fertility/pregnancy <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/RCOG-and-RCM-respond-to-misinformation-around-Covid-19-vaccine-and-fertility/>

British Islamic Medical Association <https://britishima.org/operation-vaccination/hub/covidmyths/>

Vaccine information in a range of languages <https://bit.ly/CovidVacsVideos>