

Young person COVID Vaccine FAQs



I'm young and fit – why do I need to have the vaccine?

Firstly, to protect yourself - Having the vaccine will reduce your risk of becoming seriously ill if you do get COVID.

Long Covid (a collection of symptoms that continue after the infection has cleared) can affect young people just as much as older people, even in mild cases where there may not have been obvious signs of infection. You can find out more about long covid here

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/>

Secondly, to protect others – this is because vaccinated people are much less likely to spread the virus to others. This also means that as more of the population are vaccinated, the virus has less opportunity to circulate. This is how you can protect others, some of whom might be at high risk of serious illness if they come into contact with the virus.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the virus itself.

It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and treating them.

Once your immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can often protect you for many years. You can find out more about vaccines here: <https://www.immunology.org/celebrate-vaccines/public-engagement/videos>

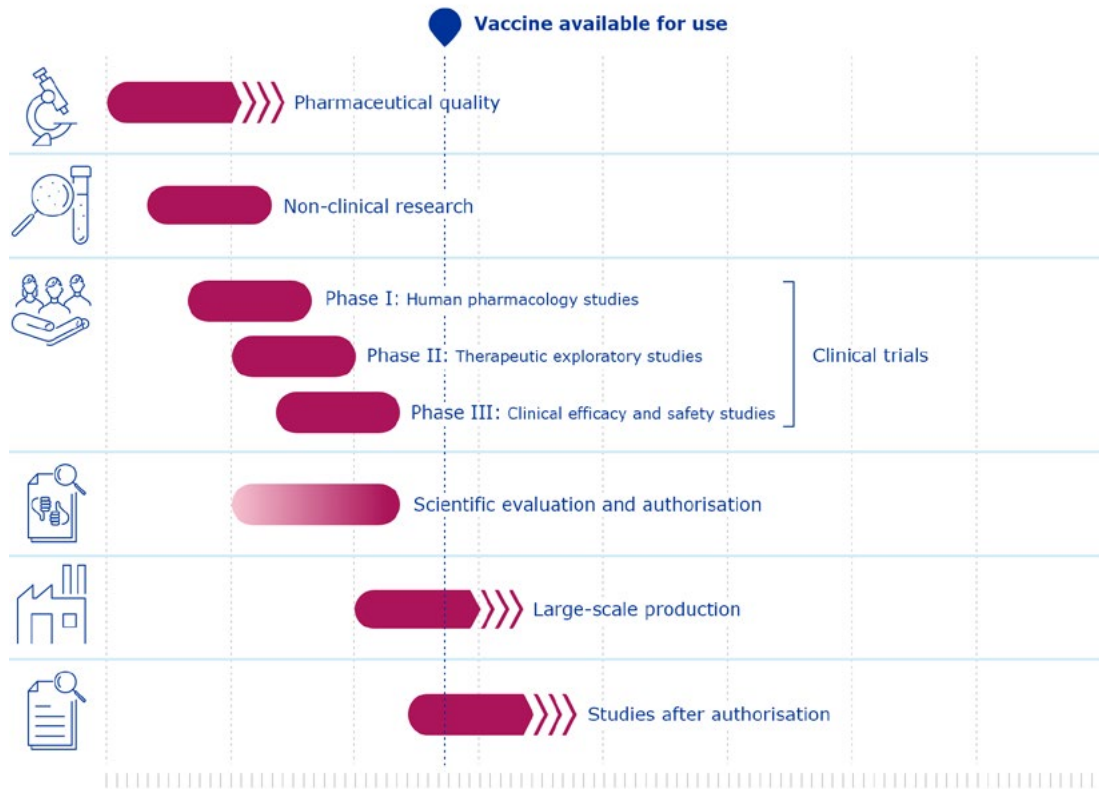
How can we know the vaccine is safe when it hasn't been tested for very long?

There are lots of rules around how medicines, including vaccines, are created, tested and made available to the public – and that is no different for the approved COVID-19 vaccines. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the official UK regulator, has said these vaccines are safe and highly effective. There a number of reasons why it was possible to develop the Covid-19 vaccines quickly compared to other medicines;

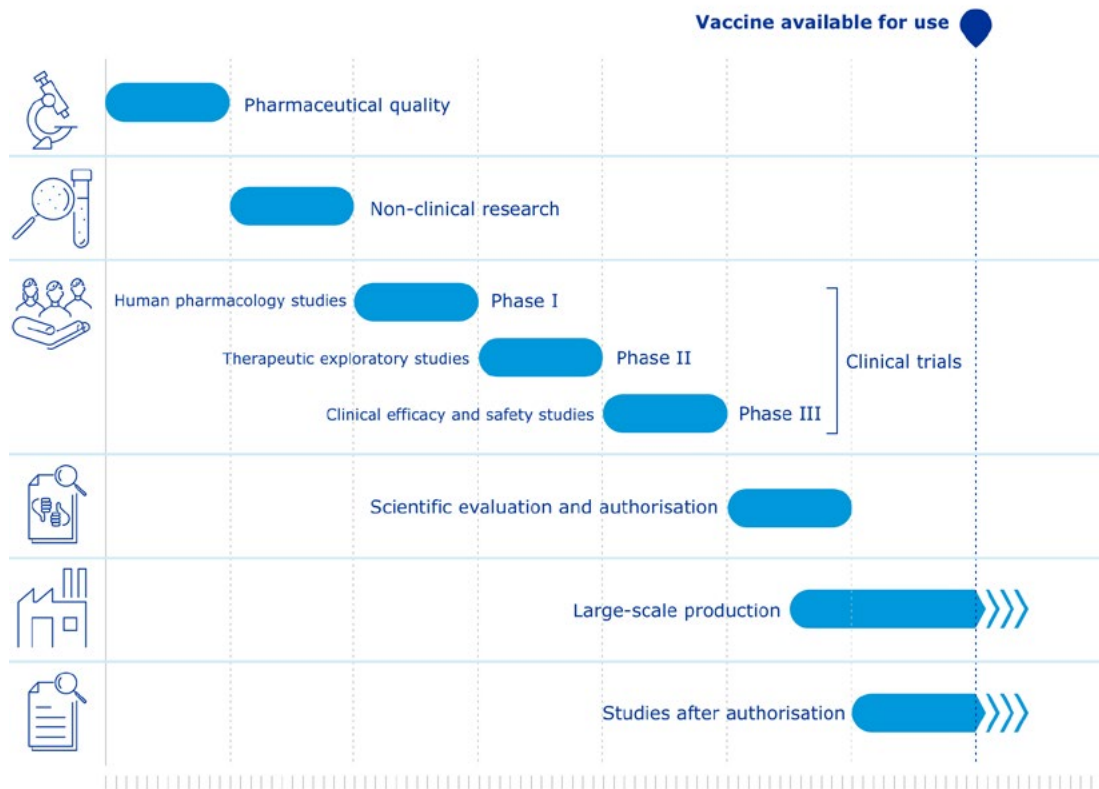
- 1.** Vaccines are developed through testing them over and over in different phases; the testing phases of the Covid-19 vaccines were run at the same time or overlapping, which sped up the process.
- 2.** The data from the tests were made available quickly so experts at the MHRA could review it as the tests were being delivered and ask questions along the way, as opposed to getting all information at the end of a testing period.
- 3.** The clinical trials for the Covid-19 vaccine managed to involve people very quickly as a global effort meant thousands of people were willing to volunteer.



Covid Vaccine development



Standard Vaccine development



How can I have the vaccine if I'm scared of needles, I feel anxious or I'm worried I'll faint?

If you are anxious or at risk of fainting let us know when you turn up for your appointment so we can talk through any concerns with you and your parent/carer. All our vaccinators are experienced and skilled health care staff and are there to help you. It's not uncommon for people to feel nervous about having injections.

For people who have serious concerns or phobias we can offer you special longer appointments at less busy times when there are fewer people around. When your appointment is made, your parent/carer can ask about a clinic that is better suited to you, at a quieter time, if you have a phobia about needles.

Will the vaccine have side effects now or in the future?

Many people have reported mild side effects after having the vaccine, including cold or flu like symptoms, and a sore or stiff arm. This is quite normal and will usually pass in a couple of days.

The vaccine has been given to millions of people worldwide, and there is currently no evidence that it has any long-term effects on things like fertility or menstrual cycles. The components of the vaccine make your body create antibodies and then usually leave within a few days. There is no evidence that other vaccines have caused long term side effects or problems later in life.

Can I have the vaccine if I am a vegetarian or vegan, or have strong religious beliefs?

The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain egg or animal products and are suitable for people of all faiths.

There are no vaccines available that have not used animal testing as part of their development. Organisations such as the Vegan Society acknowledge that the vaccine is a fundamental part of saving lives: <https://vegsoc.org/lifestyle/covid-19-vaccines/>.

I'm worried about going to a vaccination centre – where will I go and what will happen?

Vaccinations are being delivered across a range of places in Norfolk & Waveney. They are being delivered from our big hospitals in Norwich, Kings Lynn and Gorleston, some GP surgeries and pharmacies, and even from shopping centres like Market Gates in Great Yarmouth, and Castle Quarter in Norwich.

Some of these offer appointments and others offer drop-in clinics where you do not need an appointment. Some sites are not able to vaccinate people aged less than 17^{3/4} but many of them can. You can find a local walk-in clinic here: <https://apps.norfolk.gov.uk/WalkIn/Form/AllAvailableClinics>. If you are 16 or 17 and would prefer a booked appointment, you need to wait for the NHS to contact you.

When you arrive at the site follow the signs, and there will be someone to greet you at the entrance. Staff and volunteers are there to help you, and will make sure you know what to do next. Please wear a mask if you can and sanitise your hands. You will be asked for information such as your name and NHS Number so that a record can be made that you have had your vaccine. You don't need to have your NHS Number but it will make it quicker if you do. You can find it here: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/find-nhs-number/>

You will be taken to sit with a vaccinator who will talk to you about having the vaccine. If you are worried or have any questions they will be able to help. Once you have had your vaccine you might be asked to wait for 15 minutes to make sure you do not have an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions are rare, but staff are trained to help. Make sure you drink lots of water.

What is the difference between the different vaccines?

If you are under 18 you will have the Pfizer vaccine and will be asked to wait for 15 minutes after your vaccination.

People aged 18 – 39 can have the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

People aged over 40 years can have the Pfizer, Moderna or Astra Zeneca vaccines.

You can find out more about each vaccine on the government website:

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

Astra Zeneca: <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/information-for-healthcare-professionals-on-covid-19-vaccine-moderna>

I'm worried I'll losing my vaccination card.

Once you have had the jab you will be given a vaccination card which will record which vaccine you had and the date you got it. Try and keep it safe but it doesn't matter if you lose it. All NHS patients have an online record that is updated every time you see a healthcare professional. This record will be updated to show that you have had your vaccination.

Where can I find out more about having the vaccination?

Information about vaccinations for young people in Norfolk & Waveney: <https://www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/covid/children-and-young-people-12-17-years-covid-19-vaccination>

Vaccination information leaflets for young people: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-children-and-young-people>

