

Facts about Your Covid-19 Vaccine

Question	Answer
<p>“Will the vaccines alter my DNA if I take it?”</p>	<p>The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use messenger RNA (mRNA) to protect us from COVID-19. This is exciting, cutting-edge new technology.</p> <p>The vaccine contains genetic material - the mRNA – that tells your body to make just the spike protein of the virus. Your body’s immunity recognises that something new has been introduced into your body (that is, the spike protein) and produces antibodies that will protect you from the severe effects of Covid-19 should you catch it in the future.</p> <p>In the process, the mRNA breaks down and disappears within a short period of time. It never enters the nucleus of your cells so it cannot change your DNA.</p> <p>The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is made from a weakened cold virus and is not a mRNA based vaccine.</p>
<p>“The Covid-19 vaccines were rushed through without proper clinical trials which would normally take years. Does this mean they are not safe?”</p>	<p>The theories behind the new vaccines have been around for many years. What happened is that the clinical trials, which examine safety and efficacy, ran in parallel to each other to speed things up. Governments made unprecedented levels of funding available to researchers, while cutting red tape, but ensuring all safety protocols were adhered to. Recruiting participants for clinical trials which often takes months or years, was not a barrier as tens of thousands of volunteers signed up. Watch this video by the National Institute for Health Research and find out more.</p> <p>The Covid vaccines have been tested on nearly 100,000 people of all genders and ethnicities. The trials proved that the vaccines prevented severe Covid 19 infection in 90% - 95% of the study participants, with very mild side effects. The vaccines have been proven to be extremely safe and millions have now been vaccinated worldwide.</p>

<p>“Are those taking the vaccines having severe responses in large numbers?”</p>	<p>A complication or side effect (like an allergic reaction, for example) will occur within minutes to hours of receiving the vaccine. Side-effects are closely monitored and reported to ensure they remain at an acceptable and insignificant level. Any side effects can be reported by the Yellow Card scheme – you will find the details on the patient information leaflet given to you when the vaccine is given.</p> <p>The expected side effects of the vaccine are temporary and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection. This tends to be worse around one or two days after the vaccine. ● A headache is common with the Astra Zeneca vaccine. ● With the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, you might feel tired or achy or have mild flu-like like symptoms. This is your body reacting to the spike protein in the vaccine and making antibodies against it. It is proof that your vaccine is taking effect. <p>Millions have now been vaccinated safely, with rarely any adverse severe responses reported.</p>
<p>“How do I know the long-term effects of the vaccine?”</p>	<p>We know now that the vaccines are effective in the short term – that they save lives and prevent suffering.</p> <p>Even people with a mild case of Covid-19 have gone on to develop Long Covid, which has an extensive list of distressing symptoms.</p> <p>The large clinical trials and the millions of people already vaccinated have proved that the vaccines are robustly safe in the short term, and there is no data or reason which suggests that there will be any long-term side effects.</p>
<p>“Will the vaccines be used to implant a microchip to track us and control the population?”</p>	<p>There is no credible evidence to support this idea. Your mobile phone already tracks your movements without the need for a microchip.</p> <p>According to the BBC, this rumour originates from an inaccurate newspaper headline in the United States. In the article, Microsoft inventor Bill Gates talks about ‘digital certificates’ but not chips.</p>

<p>“Should I wait to see how people react to the vaccines before I take it?”</p>	<p>The Covid-19 vaccines have successfully been trialled on nearly 100,000 people, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has deemed the vaccines safe.</p> <p>We appreciate you have a choice but, in the meantime, you are at the risk of developing Covid-19 and the disease progresses differently in every individual, with some people experiencing severe illness and death.</p>
<p>“Once I get vaccinated, does that mean I won’t have to wear masks or practice social distancing anymore?”</p>	<p>You will still have to wear a mask and practice social distancing for some time and here’s why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The vaccine will prevent you from developing severe disease if you catch Covid-19 and has been proven to work 90% to 95% of trial participants. However, that means that 5% of people (1 in 20) will not be protected from developing severe disease even though they had the vaccine. ● Even after being vaccinated, you may be able to give the virus to another person. While your infection would be mild, they could become seriously ill and even end up in a hospital bed.
<p>“Will patients who take the vaccine develop severe issues that are uncovered later such as therapeutics like Thalidomide in the past?”</p>	<p>This concern is understandable, but medical science has developed considerably since the Thalidomide scandal in the 1960s. Thalidomide was not tested on humans, and since then clinical trials have become much more rigorous and laws and regulations surrounding trials and testing protocols have become immeasurably more robust.</p>
<p>“Will the Covid-19 vaccines affect the body’s immune response and hence be bad for people with a weakened immune system?”</p>	<p>Broadly, Covid vaccines will do no harm to those people with a weakened immune system. However, people with a strong immune system will respond to the vaccine more robustly.</p> <p>If you are in any doubt about your personal circumstances, talk to your hospital consultant or GP.</p>

<p>“I am weak and unwell because of my age and underlying health conditions. Should I be taking the Covid-19 vaccine? Will it make me ill or more vulnerable to illness in the future?”</p>	<p>The Covid vaccines are suitable for people with a range of long-term conditions, such as respiratory and heart disease, diabetes and those with weakened immune systems. Providing you do not have a current Covid infection, or other temporary sickness, the Covid vaccine will give your body a better defence against future Covid infection.</p> <p>If you are in any doubt about your personal circumstances, talk to your hospital consultant or GP.</p>
<p>“Dozens of elderly people have reportedly died in Norway after getting the Pfizer vaccine. Does this mean the vaccine is dangerous?”</p>	<p>Twenty-three frail, elderly people have died, according to Norwegian media.</p> <p>Though this is extremely sad for their families and friends, these deaths were not unexpected due to the poor health of these people, their extreme age and their preconditions. There is no credible connection with their recent Covid-19 vaccination.</p>
<p>“Do I need the vaccine if I’ve already had COVID-19?”</p>	<p>People can get Covid-19 more than once and there may be some short-term protection after being infected, but this protection is likely to reduce over a short period of time.</p> <p>The vaccine can extend the period you are protected, and it is safer than the risk of another Covid-19 infection.</p>
<p>“The vaccine only provides upward of 90 percent protection, whereas recovery rate of Covid-19 is 99 percent. So why should I take the vaccine? The vaccines only benefit Big Pharma.”</p>	<p>Yes, 99% of people survive Covid-19 but when it comes to the actual numbers of people, the numbers are huge.</p> <p>Over 18,000 people in Harrow have been diagnosed with Covid-19 and 4,700 people have been admitted to Northwick Park Hospital to date. The massive increase in patients puts a great strain on the hospital – and its doctors and nurses – causing distress and delays to patients with other life-threatening conditions. So, by taking the vaccine, you are helping to ensure NHS can help everyone who needs its care, more quickly.</p>

<p>“There is nothing wrong with me. I am a healthy person. So why do I need to have the vaccine?”</p>	<p>Even healthy young people can become infected with Covid-19 – some will develop severe disease and even die, to the distress of their loved ones. Fortunately, this is rare, but some young people then go on to develop Long Covid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Around 1 in 5 respondents testing positive for COVID-19 exhibit symptoms for a period of 5 weeks or longer ● Around 1 in 10 respondents testing positive for COVID-19 exhibit symptoms for a period of 12 weeks or longer <p>You may have to stay in hospital for a long time or endure a period of sickness, putting a great strain not just on you but those who depend on you. In addition, it puts a strain on our health and care resources, our economy and our communities.</p>
<p>“Why do I need the vaccine? Covid-19 is a hoax and I don’t believe in it.”</p>	<p>So far more than 100,000 people have died of the virus in UK and two million people have lost their lives worldwide. This is not a hoax.</p> <p>Behind the headlines and the figures are grief-stricken families mourning the loss of a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle, cousin or friend.</p> <p>It is in your best interests to protect yourself and your loved ones.</p>
<p>“I am from a BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) background. Why should I trust the authorities when I don’t believe they have our interests at heart?”</p>	<p>Covid-19 has hit people of Black and South Asian heritages especially hard. BAME groups have higher rates of infection, and higher rates of serious disease and mortality, as a result of substantial social inequalities.</p> <p>Historical injustices, such as the Tuskegee study in the USA, have further deterred some people from accepting the vaccine when it is offered to them. While it is true that the lived experience of Black people has involved the experience of discrimination from public health authorities, both past and current, in the context of the current pandemic, taking the vaccine is the best way we can protect our families and ourselves from this dangerous virus.</p>

	<p>Trials for the Covid-19 vaccines have been much more transparent and ethical and the vaccines have been produced in the glare of the world’s media, with a robustly proven safety profile. Black and Asian doctors, nurses and volunteers took part in these trials and we would urge you to do the same.</p> <p>But don’t take our word for it. Watch this video from the Runnymede Trust and hear what leaders of BAME communities have to say about it.</p>
<p>“Can Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Jains, Vegans take the Covid-19 vaccines? Doesn’t it contain pork gelatine, beef or egg?”</p>	<p>The approved Covid-19 vaccines do not contain any animal products or egg and is vegetarian and vegan. Nor do the vaccines contain any foetal matter as alleged by some.</p>
<p>“I have been offered the Pfizer vaccine, but can I have the British vaccine as I trust it more?”</p>	<p>All vaccines have been appropriately tested and have been proven to be more than 90% effective at preventing severe Covid-19 infection.</p> <p>At this time of great need, when supplies of vaccines are in demand all around the world, you must take the vaccine offered as you will not be given a choice.</p>
<p>“All the trials have been done with White people. Do we know how this vaccine will affect Black or South Asian individuals?”</p>	<p>The trials were conducted with volunteers from mixed ethnic backgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine - participants included 9.6% Black/African, 26% Hispanic/Latino and 3.4 percent Asian. ● Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine - participants included 10% Black and 4% Asian.
<p>“I distrust pharmaceutical companies, so I take natural medicinal ingredients such as</p>	<p>Keeping active, and eating well will help some people overcome Covid, but they will not prevent people from becoming infected.</p>

turmeric, garlic etc that can boost my immunity. Can they protect me against Covid-19?”	Older or more vulnerable people will still be at increased risk of a severe infection. Taking the vaccine will quicken your body’s response to the virus. The vaccine is the only evidence-based intervention currently available.
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Useful links:

MMR vaccine safety : <https://www.bmj.com/content/322/7279/130.3> (Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal 2000;19:1127-34)

Similarities between influenza and Covid-19: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Similarities and differences with influenza \(who.int\)](#)

Mortality of Covid-19 compared to influenza: [Deaths due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) compared with deaths from influenza and pneumonia, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Vaccine information provided by the NHS: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Covid vaccine approval documentation: [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)