# 2024 COVID-19 spring campaign

Communications Toolkit v1.0

**Last updated:** 4 April 2024



This toolkit is to support public communications on the seasonal COVID-19 vaccination campaign during spring 2024. It will be updated to include links to designed resources as they become available throughout the campaign.

**2024 Spring Campaign Timetable:**

* **15 April** – National Booking System opens for spring vaccination bookings, offering appointments from 22 April
* **15 April** - Email only invitation sent out to test how effective emails are as a channel in isolation
* **15 April** - Visits to older adult care homes and eligible housebound patients begin
* **22 April** – Invitations sent out on all other channels
* **22 April** – Start of vaccinations for all other eligible cohorts
* **29 June** – Final day to make next day NBS bookings
* **30 June** – The last date for the spring seasonal vaccination.

**Eligible cohorts in spring 2024:**

* adults aged 75 years and over by 30 June 2024
* residents in care homes for older adults by 30 June 2024
* individuals aged 6 months and over who have a weakened immune system (as [defined in the Green Book, chapter 14a; tables 3 and 4](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a)). this includes:
* Individuals with primary or acquired immunodeficiency states at the time of vaccination due to certain conditions
* Individuals on immunosuppressive or immunomodulating therapy at the time of vaccination
* Individuals with chronic immune-mediated inflammatory disease who were receiving or had received immunosuppressive therapy prior to vaccination
* Individuals who had received high dose steroids for any reason in the month before vaccination

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**Long copy**

For some, particularly older people and those with a weakened immune system, COVID-19 can still be very dangerous and even life-threatening. COVID-19 vaccines offered by the NHS provide protection against the virus and help reduce the risk of serious illness. The vaccine has saved countless lives, prevented thousands from needing to go to hospital and helped us to live with the virus without fear or restrictions.

Protection against COVID-19 (either from catching the virus or from a previous vaccination) can fade over time and the virus can change so if you are at higher risk of severe illness it is important that you top up your protection.

In line with expert advice, this spring the NHS is offering COVID-19 vaccines to people who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus – including those aged 75 and over (by 30 June 2024), residents of care homes for older adults, and those with a weakened immune system.

Vaccinations will begin on 15th April for residents in care homes for older adults and eligible housebound people. All other eligible people will be able to book their appointment from 15 April, to take place from 22nd April. Spring vaccinations will be available until 30 June 2024.

The NHS will be inviting those eligible, but you do not need to wait for an invitation to book your vaccine. Booking a spring COVID-19 vaccine is simple and easy if you are eligible:

* Download the NHS App and make an appointment
* Visit [www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine)
* Call 119 for free if you can’t get online (translators are available)

Some areas also offer convenient walk-in options – to find out what is available visit, [www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in).

Getting your COVID-19 vaccine is very convenient, with thousands of appointments available across the country every day at more sites (usually pharmacies and GP practices) than ever before for a spring campaign.

If you or your child are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine this spring, make sure you come forward for this extra protection.

You can find out the latest information about the COVID-19 vaccine at [www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination)

**Short copy**

Top up your protection against COVID-19 by getting vaccinated this spring if you are eligible. Those at increased risk from severe illness can get the vaccine, including those aged 75 or over (on 30 June 2024), people with a weakened immune system or who live in an older adult care home. The NHS will visit care homes and housebound people from 15th April to offer the vaccine and other eligible people eligible will be able book from the same day, for appointments from 22nd April. If eligible, you do not need to wait for an invitation to book your vaccine. To book, please visit the NHS App, the NHS website ([www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine)) or call 119 for free. You may also be able to visit a walk-in site which does not require a booking ([www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in)). Don’t get caught out. If you or your child are eligible, make sure you get any extra protection you need this spring. Get vaccinated against COVID-19.

**Call to Action:**

* **Before 15 April:** The NHS is writing to those eligible to remind them to get vaccinated, but you will not need to wait for an invitation to come forwards if you are eligible. Online bookings will open 15th April for appointments from 22nd April.
* **From 15 April:** If you’re aged 75 or above, or have a weakened immune system, you can now book your spring COVID-19 vaccine

1. **Resources**

More resources will be added to this table throughout the campaign.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Posters – available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=333164) **and the CRC** | |
| A variety of posters have been created that target those aged 75 and over and those with a weakened immune system. Some posters include the end date of the campaign – these should be used towards the end of campaign. Poster examples are included on the right | Other examples pending |
| **Translated posters – available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=52703952) **and the CRC** | |
| Poster outlining eligibility for the vaccine and how to book translated into 23 languages. Example in English is included on the right. |  |
| **Accessible posters – available to download from CommsLink and the CRC** | |
| These posters include really clear instructions on how to use the QR code to book | Pending |
| **Digital screens - available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=52703184) **and the CRC** | |
| Digital screens for pharmacies/GPs/hospital waiting rooms to encourage those eligible to book spring COVID-19 vaccination. | Pending |
| **Translated and accessible digital screens - available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=52727120) **and the CRC** | |
| Digital screens slides available in 3 groups of translated languages: European, Eastern European and Asian. Example in English is included on the right |  |
| **Social media assets - available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=333100) **and the CRC** | |
| **Caption:** From today (15 April) you can book your spring COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App if you are eligible. Appointments will start from 22 April. You don't need to wait to be invited. Find out more and book now at nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** An elderly couple sat at a table. One is using a mobile phone the other is also looking at whilst holding a tablet. Text in image reads; Eligible people can book their spring COVID-19 vaccine online or via the NHS App |  |
| **Caption:** If you are aged 75 or over or have a weakened immune system, you can now book your seasonal COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App. Visit nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** An elderly couple stand closely together holding hands. Text in image reads; if you are aged 75 or over or have a weakened immune system, you can book your seasonal COVID-19 vaccine |  |
| **Caption:** Anyone aged 75 or over can now book their seasonal COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App. You don't need to wait to be invited. Find out more at nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** A nurse sits facing a patient who has their back to camera. Text image reads; people aged 75 and over can now book their spring COVID-19 vaccine online or via the NHS App. |  |
| **Caption:** If you are aged 75 or over or have a weakened immune system, you can now book your seasonal COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App. Visit nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** A woman wearing a head scarf smiles with her eyes closed. Text in image reads; if you are eligible, you can book your spring COVID-19 vaccination online or via the NHS App. |  |
| **Caption:** Anyone aged 75 or over, or who has a weakened immune system, can now book their seasonal COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App. You don't need to wait to be invited. Find out more at nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** A woman sits facing a nurse who has their back to the camera. Text in image reads; get your seasonal COVID-19 vaccination against COVID-19 to top up your protection. |  |
| **Caption:** Anyone aged 75 or over, or who has a weakened immune system, can now book their seasonal COVID-19 vaccine online or on the NHS App. You don't need to wait to be invited. Find out more at nhs.uk/book-vaccine  **Alt Text:** A view over someone's shoulder as they sit at a laptop. The laptop screen shows the book your COVID vaccination page on the NHS website. Text image reads; who is eligible for the seasonal COVID-19 vaccine this spring? |  |
| **Spokespeople videos and scripts – available to download from** [**CommsLink**](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=52704880) **and the CRC** | |
| Script for offer opening | “This spring, the NHS is once again offering the COVID-19 vaccine to those that are at highest risk of getting seriously unwell if they catch the virus. If you are aged 75 or over or if you or your child have a weakened immune system, then you can now top up your protection and book your vaccine. Search ‘NHS COVID-19 vaccine’ for more details on how to book, or book through the NHS App to get protected this spring.” |
| Script on how to book | “If you are aged 75 and over or have a weakened immune system, there are lots of convenient ways to book your COVID-19 vaccine this spring. You can book your COVID-19 vaccine through the NHS App or on the NHS website, which also lists walk-in sites across the country that you can visit without an appointment.    Alternatively, if you aren’t able to book online, you can call 119 where translators will also be available to support you if you need. Get the extra protection you need this spring, search ‘NHS COVID-19 vaccine’.“ |
| Script for those with a weakened immune system | “If you have a weakened immune system, your protection against COVID-19 may fade more quickly than other peoples. You can get the extra protection you need by getting the spring COVID-19 vaccine.    You may be eligible for the vaccine if you have a disorder affecting your immune system, are undergoing immunosuppressive treatment, such as for cancer, or are taking medications that increase your risk of infection. You can check the summary of health conditions, treatments and medications that can cause a weakened immune system on the NHS website.    Search ‘NHS COVID-19 vaccine’ for more details on how to book and get protected this spring.” |
| Video of Dr Jeeves Wijesuriya, GP and Clinical Advisor for Vaccination and Screening on offering opening, how to book and who is eligible. Screenshot to the right. | Pending |
| **Other useful assets and resources** | |
| Bulletin copy for offer opening | From 15th April, those aged 75 and over and those with a weakened immune system will be able to book their spring COVID-19 vaccination with appointments available from 22 April. The vaccine provides protection to those at the highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is more convenient than ever with thousands of appointments available across the country every day at more sites (usually pharmacies and GP practices) than ever before for a spring campaign. Bookings can be made online via the NHS App or by visiting [www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine). Those that can’t get online can call 119 for free where translators will also be available. There are also [walk-in sites](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in.) available across the country. If you or your child are eligible, make sure you get any extra protection you need this spring. Get vaccinated against COVID-19. |
| Business cards for prescription bags – available to download on [CommsLink](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=203168421) and the CRC |  |
| Stickers – available to download on CommsLink and the CRC | Pending |
| UKHSA COVID-19 leaflet | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-spring-booster-resources>  Free paper copies are available [to order for free](https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/ViewProduct.html?sp=Scovid19vaccinationspring2024leaflet) and [translated versions](https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/ViewArticle.html?sp=Saguidetothespring2024covid19vaccinationcampaign) can be downloaded. Please register/login using your work email address) at [www.healthpublications.gov.uk](http://www.healthpublications.gov.uk) or call 0300 123 1002 to place orders. You can find all COVID-19 resources by clicking ‘View Campaigns’ and then ‘COVID-19’ from the drop down menu at the top of the page. |
| Key messages for 2024 campaign | Available on [CommsLink](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=203180325) |
| System letter | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-spring-booster-resources/a-guide-to-the-covid-19-spring-booster-2023> |
| JCVI advice | <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-advises-on-eligible-groups-for-2024-spring-covid-19-vaccine> |

1. **FAQ**

For an in-depth Q&A that is designed to be used for conversations with the pubic and help address any operational questions please view the fuller [NHS COVID-19 vaccination Q&A 119 script](https://future.nhs.uk/CommsLink/view?objectId=52704912).

**What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is caused by a particular type of coronavirus that infects the windpipe and lungs which are part of the respiratory system. There are a range of [symptoms](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-symptoms-and-what-to-do/) of COVID-19 including a new continuous cough, shortness of breath and an aching body. The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses including flu and a full list of symptoms is available on the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-symptoms-and-what-to-do/). COVID-19 often gets better on its own but can lead to serious illness. It is important to get the COVID-19 vaccine ahead of winter if you are eligible to protect yourself.

**Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine this spring?**

If you're at increased risk of illness from COVID-19, getting a COVID-19 vaccine gives you good protection and helps to:

* reduce your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19
* reduce your risk of needing to go to hospital if you catch COVID-19
* reduce your risk of catching and spreading COVID-19
* protect against different strains (variants) of COVID-19

COVID-19 vaccines are offered to those who have had previous doses, because the virus changes, and protection fades, over time.

**Why do I need another dose of the COVID-19 vaccine when I had one in Autumn/Winter?**

Like some other vaccines, levels of protection may decline over time. The virus can also change each year. Vaccinations are being offered to those at increased risk this spring to help them to maintain strong protection from becoming seriously ill or needing to go to hospital if they catch COVID-19.

**I got the COVID-19 vaccine previously and still got COVID-19, why should I get it again?**

Topping up your protection with a spring COVID-19 vaccination will mean that if you do get COVID-19 you are less likely to experience serious symptoms or hospitalisation. UKHSA surveillance data on last spring’s programme showed that those who received a vaccine were around 50% less likely to be admitted to hospital with COVID-19 from two weeks following vaccination, compared to those who did not receive one.

**Who can get a COVID vaccination this spring?**

Eligibility for a spring vaccination is similar to previous years but those with a weakened immune system are now eligible from 6 months instead of 5 years. This follows [updated advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-of-children-aged-6-months-to-4-years-jcvi-advice-9-december-2022/covid-19-vaccination-of-children-aged-6-months-to-4-years-jcvi-advice-9-december-2022#:~:text=Regarding%20children%20aged%206%20months,the%20first%20and%20second%20doses) last April on COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 6 months to 4 years in a clinical risk group.

Following JCVI advice, the following groups of people can get a further vaccination this

spring:

* adults aged 75 and over
* residents in a care home for older adults
* people aged 6 months and over who have a weakened immune system.

**How is it decided who is eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccines for free on the NHS each year?**

The COVID-19 vaccine programme aims to reduce the number of people that get seriously ill and reduce the spread of the virus. The government decide which groups will be eligible for free vaccines on the NHS. Their decision is based on the independent advice of clinical experts in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) who review the latest clinical evidence and data. Eligibility differs to the autumn campaign as over winter, the threat of COVID-19 is at its greatest so a larger group of people are eligible.

**I haven’t had a COVID-19 vaccination yet, can I get a spring COVID-19 vaccination?**

If you are one of the people who is eligible for a vaccine this spring, yes. Even if you haven’t received any previous doses, you should have a dose during this year’s spring offer if you are eligible to help protect you against serious illness. Most people do not need extra doses to make up for those you have missed. Add in clinical line on under 5s.

**Will I need to wait until I am 75 to get the vaccine?**

If you are turning 75 years of age between April and 30 June 2024, you do not have to wait until your birthday, you can book in to get your vaccine at any time during the spring campaign as long as you are 75 by 30 June 2024.

**What conditions mean I have a weakened immune system and can get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

You can check the summary of health conditions, treatments and medications that can cause a weakened immune system at www.nhs.uk/get-covid-vaccine.

This list is a summary and does not cover everything. For a full definition of immunosuppression, please see Chapter 14a (table 3) of the [Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a)

People who have a weakened immune system can include:

* those who have or previously had a blood cancer, such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma
* organ, bone marrow or stem cell transplant recipients
* people who have HIV infection at all stages
* people who have a genetic disorder affecting the immune system
* those undergoing a treatment such as steroid medicine, biological therapy, chemotherapy or radiotherapy (including those whose treatment ended up to 6 months ago)
* people who take certain medicines that increase your risk of infection, such as azathioprine, dexamethasone, prednisolone, ciclosporin or mycophenolate (depending on your dosage)
* recipients of long-term immunosuppressive treatment for conditions such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, scleroderma and psoriasis

**Will I be invited to receive my spring COVID-19 vaccination?**

If you’re eligible for a vaccination this spring, you will receive a text message, email, NHS App message or letter from the NHS. You don’t need to wait to receive your invitation. If you’re eligible, go ahead and book.

**Can I have the vaccine if I feel unwell?**

If you are unwell, wait until you have recovered to have your vaccine. You should not attend an appointment if you have a fever or think you might be infectious to others.

**How do I book my spring COVID-19 vaccination?**

You can book your spring COVID-19 vaccination online via the NHS App or by visiting [www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine). If you are booking for your child aged under 16, you can book their spring COVID-19 vaccination on their behalf online by visiting [www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine).

If you can’t get online you can call 119 and translators are available. You can also use text phone 18001 119 or the NHS British Sign Language service at www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs119.

Some areas are offering convenient walk-in options for you and/or your child’s spring COVID-19 vaccination – to find out what is available visit www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in.

If you or your child receive care at home, contact your GP surgery for a home visit. If they can’t arrange it, find your local COVID-19 vaccination contacts at www.england.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination-contacts.

**When can I get a spring vaccination?**

The NHS will start visiting care homes for older adults to vaccinate residents on 15 April. This will be the same day (15 April) that the National Booking System ([www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine)) opens for those aged 75 and over and those aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system to book their vaccine appointments. COVID-19 vaccine appointments will be start from 22 April until 30 June. The last day to make a booking on the National Booking System will be 29 June but it is advisable not to wait until then as there may not be a large choice of appointments.

**Where will I get my spring COVID-19 vaccination?**

For those aged 75 and over or 6 months and over with a weakened immune system, there are thousands of appointments available across the country every day at more sites than ever before for a spring campaign. The majority of sites will be at a local pharmacy or your GP surgery.

For residents in older adult care homes, the NHS will visit the care home to deliver vaccinations.

For those that receive all their care at home, a home visit should be arranged via their GP.

**What will happen at my vaccination appointment/do I need to bring anything with me?**

For those that are eligible for the vaccine due to having a weakened immune system, we’ll need to confirm you (or your child) still have a weakened immune system before we can vaccinate you. For the health condition or treatment that weakens your immune system, it will help if you can show:

* the invitation letter to get a COVID-19 vaccine
* a repeat prescription or medicine box, OR
* an NHS letter confirming your diagnosis, OR
* your health record or medication history in the NHS App.

If your health status has changed and you no longer have a weakened immune system, you don’t need to book another appointment.

If you have a history of allergies, or if you had a reaction immediately after a previous dose, you may be advised to stay for 15 minutes after the vaccine. Please make sure you tell the vaccinator.

**Which vaccine will I be given?**

COVID-19 vaccines used in the programme are recommended by the JCVI. There are several different COVID-19 vaccines in use in the UK – these have been updated since the original vaccines and provide protection against more recent strains (Omnicron) of COVID-19 circulating.

This spring, XBB.1.5 vaccines, as deployed in the later months of Autumn 2023 will be used. These are all mRNA vaccines. There is no alternative to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines available through the NHS this spring. Where there is a greater risk of severe allergy, NHS vaccination services can offer a clinical assessment and discuss your options for vaccination, this may include having the vaccine in an enhanced clinical setting such as a hospital. Children under 12 years old will be given smaller doses than older children and adults.

The following vaccines are advised for use in all individuals aged 18 years and over:

* Comirnaty 30 Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccine. Dose: 30 micrograms
* Spikevax XBB.1.5 vaccine. Dose: 50 micrograms

The following vaccines are advised for young people aged 12 to 17 years:

* Comirnaty 30 Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccine. Dose: 30 micrograms

The following vaccines are advised for children aged 5 to 11 years:

* Comirnaty 10 Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccine. Dose: 10 micrograms

The following vaccines are advised for children aged 6 months to 4 years:

* Comirnaty 3 Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccine. Dose: 3 micrograms

Further information is available at [www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination)

The vaccines have all been tested in line with rigorous standards and have been found to give good protection against the virus. Most people can have any of the COVID-19 vaccines and you will be offered a vaccine that is suitable for you and provides good protection against COVID-19.

**Is there anybody that should not have the spring vaccine?**

There are very few eligible people who should not have a COVID-19 vaccination this spring. If you have had a severe reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine you should discuss this with your doctor as you may be referred to an allergy specialist for clinical assessment.

**What should I do if I have allergies/may be allergic to the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?**

At your vaccination appointment, tell the healthcare professional about your allergy history. They will carry out a clinical assessment to make sure you are offered vaccination in a suitable setting. Some people experience mild or common allergies following vaccination but have safely received an mRNA vaccine before. This includes having a rash, swelling, wheezing or hives.

If you’ve had any of these mild or common allergies, you can continue to have your vaccine at a vaccination centre or participating community pharmacy. They’ll help you to manage any allergies or side effects.

For rare cases of anaphylaxis or other systemic reactions, an expert allergist or other appropriate specialist will assess your risk. They may advise you to get vaccinated in hospital for additional observation and monitoring.

Your GP surgery or vaccination centre should refer you for further assessment if this is appropriate for you. If they can’t arrange this, you can [find your local COVID-19 vaccination contacts](http://www.england.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination-contacts).

You can read [NHS guidance on COVID-19 vaccines](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination/about-covid-19-vaccination/) or find out more about ingredients in the vaccines currently available in this [guide to the use of human and animal products in vaccines on gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-human-and-animal-products-in-vaccines/guide-to-the-use-of-human-and-animal-products-in-vaccines).

**Do I need to receive the same type of vaccine or booster as my previous ones?**

No, all COVID-19 vaccines authorised for use by the NHS are effective and provide a strong booster response. When you attend your appointment, the NHS will offer you a safe, effective vaccine.

**Do I have to pay for my COVID-19 vaccine?**

You do not need to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine if you are in an eligible group for a seasonal vaccination this spring. For Spring 2024 this includes all residents in a care home for adults, those aged 75 and over (by 30 June 2024) and those with a weakened immune system.

The COVID-19 vaccine programme aims to reduce the number of people that get seriously ill from COVID-19 infection and reduce the spread of the virus. The government decide which groups will be eligible for free vaccines on the NHS. Their decision is based on the independent advice of clinical experts in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) who review the latest clinical evidence and data.

For the first time ever, COVID-19 vaccines can be bought by those aged 12 and over that are not eligible for a free vaccine on the NHS, similar to the flu vaccine, although it is extremely unlikely that healthier/younger individuals will experience serious illness if they catch COVID-19.

**Are the vaccines safe?**

All COVID-19 vaccines offered in England have been approved for use by the independent

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

These vaccines have met the MHRA’s strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process, and

continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

Each of the vaccines are tested on tens of thousands of people across the world. They are

tested on both men and women, on people from different ethnic backgrounds, and of all age

groups.

Like any other vaccine or medicine, COVID-19 vaccines are being continuously monitored for safety – the benefits of the vaccines far outweigh risk in the majority of patients. You and your healthcare professional can report any suspected side effects through the tried and trusted Yellow Card Scheme.

**Are there any side effects to the vaccine?**

Common side effects are the same for all COVID-19 vaccines, including the updated vaccines being used this spring and include:

having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection – this tends to be worst around 1 to 2 days after the vaccine

* feeling tired
* headache
* general aches or mild flu-like symptoms

You can rest and take paracetamol (follow the dose advice in the packaging) to help you feel better. Side effects following vaccination normally last less than a week.

If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, you can call NHS 111 or for text/phone use 18001 111.

You should seek medical advice urgently if, after vaccination, you experience:

* chest pain
* shortness of breath
* feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart

If you had a serious side effect after a previous dose you may be advised to avoid or delay further vaccination. You should discuss this with your doctor or specialist.

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme.

Cases of inflammation of the heart (called myocarditis or pericarditis) have been reported very rarely after both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. These cases have been seen mostly in younger men and within several days of vaccination. Most of the people affected have felt better and recovered quickly following rest and simple treatments.

**Can you still catch COVID-19 after having the vaccine?**

The COVID-19 vaccine will reduce the chance of you becoming severely unwell from COVID-19 this spring and summer. It may take a few days for your body to build up some extra protection from the dose. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but any infection should be less severe.

**How do vaccines work?**

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases. It's usually 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.