

Questions asked during the webinar:

(Please note that all questions were answered by a clinician or public health professional based on research and guidance from government bodies including the UKHSA and NHS)

Do we have an age breakdown of recent hospitalisation?

Biggest group effected is 60+. Very few young people go to hospital thankfully.

Where can we see the long term data for children having the jabs?

We don't have long term data as the program hasn't been running for that long but we have no reason to expect there to be any long term effects and in fact we know that from the history of all the vaccines we have at the moment, if there are going to be effects they tend to display within the first couple of months.

We also know that these vaccines breakdown very quickly within the body. The mRNA which delivers the instructions to the body to make the proteins that the body then recognises as part of the virus and creates an immune response, that mRNA breaks down within a couple of days and the proteins the body produces break down after a couple of months. There is no evidence at all that those things stick around in the body or cause any long term damage.

The government, through clinical trials and the yellow card scheme are monitoring side effects. They are monitoring the rates of mild, moderate and severe side effects and will continue to do that for a very long time to come.

Are there long term effects on children?

We don't know the long term effects but all the evidence currently is showing us that if people do experience side effects they are going to display within the first few days.

Are there alternatives to needles?

Not yet, we have a nasal spray version for flu vaccine and there are various institutions working on nasal sprays for Covid immunisation. These are unlikely to be approved anytime soon as these are still in the early stages but of course that is one of the development being looked at, especially for children.

Public Health England told children under 10 to stop doing LFD's is that correct? My 6 year old was doing them until school advised them not to do so.

The advice on LFD's at the start of the year was that they should only be used in children aged 11 and over. PHE/UKHSA issued an update at the start of this term that LFD's can be used in younger children as long as the parents feel confident and comfortable to help them do the nasal swabbing.

With the new LFD's available, there is no need to do a throat swab which is the most unpleasant part. This means it is now possible to use LFD's on younger children. We are not advising that group to do so routinely but as a parent you can absolutely choose to do that.

We have changed our advice to schools and we are telling them that if there is a Covid case within your household and you have a child who would otherwise be going to school as they have no symptoms you should do a LFD on the child every day as we know that the risk of transmission between the household is very high. Certainly schools have expressed they are seeing cases in siblings where they know that 1 sibling is positive and then another sibling later tests positive. We

are saying that children particularly in KS2 and above we are advising LFD's if there is a positive case within the household so that children can go into school with some measure of safety to know that they aren't infectious.

My 12-year-old was due to have his vaccine but because my daughter had Covid and he was a close contact I rang the immunisation service and I was informed that he shouldn't have the vaccine. Will there be another clinic within his school?

Yes, there are sessions being arranged but exact arrangements for each school will be different depending on the number of students who need the catch up but you can take that into your own hands and book them in through the national booking service. Our closest site is the Manton Heights site in Bedford.

If transport availability or cost may prevent you from accessing the vaccination site, then please be assured we are able to offer you a free taxi journey to and from in order to support you to receive your vaccination. This can be found here (URL: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination-programme/free-taxi-covid-19-vaccine>)

If my child wasn't vaccinated in school due to a recent Covid infection when can I visit the vaccination site?

28 days from the date of the test or onset of symptoms whichever is earlier.

If my child has had Covid and are fit and healthy do they still need to have the vaccine?

If you catch Covid it will give good protection as your own natural immunity will respond to the virus but the problem is that immunity will start waning and we don't know how long this will last. Each individual's immunity is different and may wane after 2-3 months so you can end up back to having no extra protection regardless of previous infection. Therefore, we do recommend that even if you have had Covid, wait the specified time (for most 18+ this will be 28 days/4 weeks and most 12-17 this will be 84 days/12 weeks) and then go and have your vaccine because your natural immunity will wane and it won't be enough to sustain going forward.

Can children get nose bleeds after having Covid?

What children can get is rhinitis which is inflammation of nasal passages and this can lead to nose bleeds. So yes this can be the case

If children have already had Covid and had it mildly. How likely is it that

a) they will catch it again and

b) it will be any worse

These are really hard to predict, everyone is so individual and it's your own immune systems reaction to the virus and you cannot predict what that response will be. It is hard to answer so yes they can get re-infected and the reaction to the first infection will likely determine the severity of infection the second time around.

I have heard that the vaccine will impact the fertility of my child. Is this true?

Absolutely not. There is no link between this vaccine or any vaccine and an impact on fertility. No evidence this vaccine effects fertility for women or men. There have now been studies that have looked at this and found that in vaccinated or unvaccinated women the ovarian follicle quality was no different and there were concerns that the spike protein could attach to the placenta and cause problems but that has been proven not to be the case.

It is also clear that there is no change in the rate of embryo implantation in the womb. They have compared that in women undergoing IVF and compared the rate of embryo implantation before and after vaccination. Studies looking at male fertility have looked at the sperm quality, motility and total sperm count and again found no difference between before and after vaccination tests.

Not only is there no historical precedence of vaccines leading to fertility issues, there's absolutely no evidence to support that claim for this particular vaccine. Please see the NHS website here (URL: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/pregnancy-breastfeeding-fertility-and-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/>) for information on pregnancy and fertility.

A BBC News article stated that people who are fully vaccinated can be just as infectious as those who have not received their vaccinations. Is this true?

The studies that have looked at transmission have found that the rates of transmissions are reduced if you are fully vaccinated.

The study that was mentioned looked at the transmission rate between households where 1 or all of the people were fully vaccinated and as mentioned it is still possible to transmit the virus but this is dramatically reduced once fully vaccinated. The Delta variant is more transmissible and has changed the picture but what we can see is transmission between households is very high but if the people are vaccinated there is still a lower risk of transmission. Some of the headlines around that study haven't been representative of the study findings.

12 year old son is underweight, should they have the vaccine?

This question is a clinical one and it would be inappropriate for us to answer without knowing your medical history. Please consult your GP.

In America they have approved the Pfizer vaccine for children below the age of 12. Do these children receive the same dose?

They have adjusted the dose given to children under the age of 12.

Can children do LFD's if they have had Covid in the last few weeks?

We don't advise that, they can do them of course but it isn't a strict rule as with the PCR tests. You are instructed not to do another PCR for 90 days because a PCR can detect small pieces of the virus long after you have stopped being infectious. LFD's work in a different way and will display a positive result when you are infectious. This is why LFD's are very good to be used regularly and also prior to events such as meeting with elderly relatives.

We do expect that people will have a degree of immunity for a period of months after they have been infected with Covid so there is little value with testing somebody with an LFD soon after they have had a period of infection. We expect people to be infectious for a period of 14 days but after that all the data shows they are no longer a risk to other people.

In terms of advice we are giving to schools where we are requesting household contacts of a positive case, we are excluding those children who have had a positive Covid test within the past 90 days from that advice.

More generally, our advice at the moment for children of secondary school age and adults is to test twice-weekly with an LFD but also when meeting people who you do not normally meet or maybe vulnerable such as an elderly relative

My child is nervous about having the vaccination. Is there support available for my child?

All of our vaccinators are well trained to support people of all ages to receive their vaccinations. We expect some people to be anxious so when you arrive to have your vaccine tell the person that you are anxious and they will take steps to help with that. They can help to calm you down and answer any questions before giving the vaccine.

My children have/ are being tested for a certain medical condition and have been advised to have 2 doses. Is this safe?

This question is a clinical one and it would be inappropriate for us to answer without knowing your medical history. Please consult your GP.

When will Booster Vaccinations be available for adults aged 30?

The JCVI who advise the government on vaccinations and immunisations only advise those who are 40+, health and social care workers and those who are vulnerable to receive a booster dose. They will constantly be looking at the data from other countries and making decisions based upon that data. Data from Israel as an example shows the effectiveness of their booster programme so our government will be looking at that and considering the benefit of expanding the boosters to younger people too.

Will boosters become a yearly thing?

The government will be looking at the data, particularly the antibody waning to look at the levels and how this changes over time. We need to understand, particularly after the booster dose, how fast the waning happens. This will inform us of when future doses may need to be scheduled. The Flu vaccine is only offered for free to certain vulnerable groups and this may become the same with the Covid vaccination too. We will also need to consider the effects of variants and whether the vaccines we already have remain effective.

How come people who have been double vaccinated can still get Covid?

The vaccine isn't going to be 100% effective. The purpose of the vaccine is to prevent you getting severely ill from Covid, preventing hospital admissions and deaths. It doesn't prevent you from getting a milder illness. If you are double vaccinated hopefully you won't catch it at all but if you do it is very likely to be a milder illness for you and it will reduce your chance of getting long-term consequences. No vaccine is 100% but this vaccine is more effective than many we have. It is certainly more effective than the flu vaccine we use each year. It is a very good vaccine but it will not be 100%

Once I've had the vaccine can I stop wearing my mask, doing LFD's, keeping a distance and increasing ventilation when meeting indoors?

For the reasons mentioned in the previous answer, those who have been vaccinated can still catch Covid, it is often much more mild and people can clear the infection much quicker but during their infectious period they can still pass this onto others so it is really important to keep doing what we can to keep ourselves and others safe. A good way to think of this is a Vaccine+ strategy. The vaccines are very effective but they are not the only thing we need to do if we want to bring this pandemic to an end.

How are those who are vulnerable identified for early vaccination/boosters or 2nd doses for under 18's?

We follow the guidelines in the 'Green Book' immunisation guide which has a list of certain conditions in it which are deemed more clinically vulnerable. If you aren't sure please check the NHS vaccination website and if you believe you should be eligible but haven't been contacted, please consult your GP.