

## Staff vaccination

This information is based on the results of a national survey sent to renal staff over a 10-day period in mid-January 2021. Up to 20 January, there had been 525 responses (60% nursing staff; 15% AHPs, 14% doctors and 11% other renal staff). 70% had already received one vaccine; 21% had not received because they had not been offered or could not make the appointment time; 9% did not wish to have the vaccine at the present time.

The reasons for vaccine hesitancy are varied. **Here is some information that might help those who are uncertain or could be used to support colleagues to discuss the issues.** It is important to discuss whether information being received is a personal opinion or whether it is being provided by a scientist or health care professional who has specific knowledge in this area.

### 1. Safety, testing and side effects

This was the main reason why staff had hesitancy about having the vaccination.

- All three vaccines have been through the same stringent regulatory approval process (MHRA).
- The regulatory team have fully reviewed the safety information reported from the trials, which includes follow-up data from 23,000 people for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and 44,000 people for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
- Side effects are mostly “flu-like” symptoms such as a headache, aching, fever, as well as pain and tenderness at the injection site. These usually last less than 48 hours

Here are some common AOs:

<https://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/vk/COVID19-FAQs>

### 2. Fertility

Many were concerned about the vaccine's impact on fertility.

- There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility.
- Claims of any effect of COVID-19 vaccination on fertility are speculative and not supported by any data.
- There is no biologically plausible mechanism by which current vaccines would cause any impact on women's fertility.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has issued this statement:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/RCOG-and-RCM-respond-to-misinformation-around-Covid-19-vaccine-and-fertility/>

### 3. Allergy

There were concerns about allergies.

- There are very few individuals who cannot receive the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.
- Individuals with a history of anaphylaxis to food, an identified drug or vaccine, or an insect sting can receive any COVID-19 vaccine, as long as they are not known to be allergic to any component (excipient) of the vaccine.
- Individuals with a history of immediate onset-anaphylaxis or an unexplained anaphylaxis should not be vaccinated with the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. The AstraZeneca vaccine can be used as an alternative (if not otherwise contraindicated)

Further information is available:

<https://www.bsaci.org/update-on-mhra-decision-re-pfizer-covid-19-vaccination/>

#### 4. COVID-19 antibodies

Some were uncertain about having the vaccine because they had antibodies to COVID-19.

- People infected with COVID-19 in the past are likely to be protected against reinfection for several months
- Staff who contracted the disease in the first wave may now be vulnerable to catching it again
- It is important to still have the vaccine, even if you believe you still have antibodies, as there is still a risk that you could acquire COVID-19 and transmit to others
- There are no safety concerns about having the vaccine after you have had previous infection. It is recommended to wait until 4 weeks after you have recovered from the symptoms of COVID-19 or 4 weeks after your test if you did not have symptoms.

Further information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/past-covid-19-infection-provides-some-immunity-but-people-may-still-carry-and-transmit-virus>

**More advice on how to answer patients' questions will follow. It is important that you provide patients and their families with a balanced view of vaccination according to your professional code of practice.**

**Many people need time to think about vaccination. If you or your colleagues have concerns about having the vaccine now, then there will continue to be opportunities for having the vaccine at a later date. You may wish to share your concerns with your line manager.**

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