

QUESTIONS THAT PATIENTS MAY ASK STAFF

Are the vaccines safe?

- yes, they are safe
- the vaccines have been fully tested
- the vaccines have been through the usual regulatory processes

Which vaccine is best for me?

- the best vaccine is the one that you are offered first

Are there any situations when I should not have the vaccine?

- severe reaction (hospitalisation) to another vaccine or another allergen
- pregnancy – you should only consider the vaccine if you are pregnant after careful discussion with your medical team
- not within one month of a kidney transplant and some units may wait until 3 months after a transplant
- not within one month of having COVID-19
- not within 7 days of receiving another vaccine e.g. Hepatitis B, Flu
- you do not need to stop/reduce any medication prior to having the vaccine

When/how will I be called to have the vaccine?

- people who are having dialysis, have had a transplant or have an eGFR of less than 15 ml/min (called clinically extremely vulnerable) are in priority group 4 for vaccination and are now being vaccinated.
- Group 4 are now or very soon being contacted by letter or by their renal unit. The government aims to have offered everyone in the top four priority groups their vaccination by mid-February.
- after this people in groups from group 5 downwards will be called. Group 6 includes people with CKD 3 and some people at CKD 4 if they haven't been invited following advice from their renal team under group 4.
- the vaccine is free, and you should never respond to an email that asks for payment, as this is a scam

What are the side effects?

- many people will have a sore arm, a few have tiredness, and a few have general aching over their body which can last for a couple of days and feel like mild flu.
- a raised temperature is common. Paracetamol can be taken for aching or a raised temperature.
- the vaccine has no impact on your transplant or dialysis
- there is no evidence that the vaccine has any impact on fertility

What happens after I have had the vaccine?

- you will need to continue with the current guidance for social distancing (hands, face, space)
- there will not be any impact on your risk of getting severe COVID-19 until at least two weeks after the first vaccination. Your best protection will not be until at least one week after your second vaccine.
- you are likely to be called for a second vaccination within 4 to 12 weeks
- it has been reported that there may be a delay in receiving the vaccine. If this happens, your clinical team will let you know but this is unlikely

Who should I trust?

- your clinical team or your GP
- reputable websites and helplines, such as Kidney Care UK and the NHS
<https://www.kidneycareuk.org/news-and-campaigns/coronavirus-advice/#vaccine>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>
- do check where your information is coming from and do not always trust what you see on social media
- clinical teams are guided by national experts who continuously review policies, so information can change
- lots of people are giving their opinion on the vaccine but they often don't have access to all the detailed and reassuring safety information which your clinical teams have seen.
- there are other places to look for advice, including the National Kidney Federation, the Renal Association, Kidney Research UK and PKD Charity. NHS London has information in different languages
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/covid-19-vaccine-communication-materials/>

Have you/would you have the vaccine?

If you feel comfortable, please do tell patients if you have received the vaccine yourself – they often find this very reassuring.

- if you have concerns about the vaccine, then it is important to give the facts and to adhere to your professional code of practice (please make sure you do not express personal beliefs)
- if you are not sure of answers or do not feel comfortable talking about the vaccine, please consider asking a senior colleague for help.