

## **Regional Clinical Advice Response Service 07/01/21**

**For any COVID-19 vaccination related queries or to escalate an incident please contact:**  
[england.swcovid19-voc@nhs.net](mailto:england.swcovid19-voc@nhs.net)

### **Revised PGD for COVID-19**

For your information, the revised Patient Group Direction for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 (Pfizer/BioNTech) has been published by NHSEI and can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/patient-group-direction-for-covid-19-mrna-vaccine-bnt162b2-pfizer-biontech/>

This Patient Group Directive has been amended to:

- mention consent, or 'best-interests' decision in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- footnote that carers are included in priority group 6
- update criteria for exclusion and cautions pertaining to anaphylaxis
- remove criteria for exclusion and update caution relating to past history of COVID-19 infection
- define minimum dose interval and vaccination in accordance with national recommendations
- update advice for women of childbearing age and remove requirement to avoid pregnancy until 2 months after the second dose of vaccine
- allow for vaccination of breastfeeding women
- allow for administration of a sixth dose if obtainable from the multidose vial
- update supplies section to order via the national appointed supply route for the provider

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Updated Advice**

The below updated advice regarding scheduling, pregnancy and breastfeeding was covered by the *Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination* (30 December 2020) which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/950113/jcvi-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-dec-2020-revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950113/jcvi-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-dec-2020-revised.pdf)

### **Scheduling and Prioritisation of Vaccinations - Update**

JCVI states that the first priorities for the current COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of COVID-19 mortality and the protection of health and social care staff and systems. Secondary priorities could include vaccination of those at increased risk of hospitalisation and at increased risk of exposure, and to maintain resilience in essential public services.

For both Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines, a two-dose schedule is advised. **However, In the context of the epidemiology of COVID-19 in the UK in late 2020, the JCVI places a high priority on promoting rapid, high levels of vaccine uptake amongst vulnerable persons.**



Therefore, given data indicating high efficacy from the first dose of both Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines, the Committee advises **that delivery of the first dose to as many eligible individuals as possible should be initially prioritised over delivery of a second vaccine dose**. This should maximise the short-term impact of the programme.

The second dose of the **PfizerBioNTech** vaccine **may be given between 3 to 12 weeks following the first dose**. The second dose of the **AstraZeneca** vaccine **may be given between 4 to 12 weeks following the first dose**.

JCVI advises that the second vaccine dose should be with the same vaccine as the first dose. Switching between vaccines or missing the second dose is not advised as this may affect the duration of protection.

See below link for the statement from the UK Chief Medical Officers supporting the new recommended dosing schedule of the COVID-19 vaccines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-the-profession-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-the-uk-covid-19-vaccination-programmes/letter-to-the-profession-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-regarding-the-uk-covid-19-vaccination-programmes>

### **Updated Advice on Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**

JCVI does not advise routine pregnancy testing before receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine. Those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

There is no known risk associated with giving non-live vaccines whilst breastfeeding. JCVI advises that breastfeeding women may be offered vaccination with the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines. The developmental and health benefits of breastfeeding should be considered along with the woman's clinical need for immunisation against COVID-19, and the woman should be informed about the absence of safety data for the vaccine in breastfeeding women.

### **Updated Advice for Health Professionals on Pregnant Women Who Are Vaccinated Against Coronavirus (COVID-19), Chicken Pox (varicella), Shingles or MMR**

Please be aware that the national surveillance form for MMR, varicella or shingles vaccinations given in pregnancy has been updated to **include COVID-19**. Full guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vaccination-in-pregnancy-vip>: please can all immunisers review this updated information.

There are no known risks for women who are vaccinated against COVID-19 or measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox or shingles during any stage of pregnancy or shortly before conception, however, it is important these women are identified nationally for surveillance and potential follow-up.

Varicella, shingles or MMR vaccines given in pregnancy are highly likely to have been given in error: as always please inform the Screening & Immunisations Team of any vaccine errors so we can support you in managing these appropriately.

Please ensure that any COVID-19 vaccines given during pregnancy are appropriately recorded on this surveillance form even when this is not a 'vaccine error' following recent guidance updates the Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines should only be considered for women who are pregnant when the potential benefits outweigh any potential risks for the mother and foetus.

### **New Patient Leaflets**

Due to recent changes regarding scheduling and vaccination in pregnancy and while breastfeeding, PHE have updated their patient information leaflets.

Sites can continue to use most of the existing leaflets if you still have stock; new leaflet deliveries will be of the updated leaflets. Patients should be made aware that although the old leaflets stated the second vaccine dose should be after 3 weeks, this has now changed to between 3 and 12 weeks.

However, you should immediately stop giving patients the "Guide for women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding", and you will need to print / photocopy sufficient new leaflets for any relevant patients you will be vaccinating in the week beginning 4 January 2021.

Until your new stock arrives, you can print copies of this new guide from [here](#). You will see a "web version" suitable for downloading and printing or photocopying locally and a "print version" suitable for professional printers. You should not attempt to order these leaflets directly and they may be showing as "out of stock" on the site.

Wave 6 sites, mobilising in the week beginning 11 January, will not need to print any leaflets as they will be supplied with the updated leaflets from the start.

The following Updated patient leaflets are now available:

- COVID-19 vaccination: women of childbearing age, currently pregnant or breastfeeding
- COVID-19 vaccination: guide for older adults
- COVID-19 vaccination: guide for healthcare workers
- COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for social care staff
- COVID-19 vaccination: what to expect after vaccination
- COVID-19 vaccination: why you are being asked to wait 31 December 2020 Guidance

All these leaflets can be found at the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-vaccination-programme>

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