



UK Health
Security
Agency



COVID-19 vaccine

Waiting after your COVID-19 vaccination



Withdrawn September 2023

What is changing

Up until now, people receiving the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines have been asked to wait for 15 minutes before leaving the vaccination centre. This was because the rate of serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) reported after these 2 vaccines is slightly higher (around 5 to 10 per million doses) than after other vaccines (normally 1 per million).

Why is this changing

Due to the Omicron variant, the booster programme for adults is being accelerated. As part of this, and given the very low rate of anaphylaxis, the 15 minute wait has been suspended, as we now have much more experience with giving these vaccines to millions of people. People are not normally observed for 15 minutes after other vaccinations.

Who is advising this change

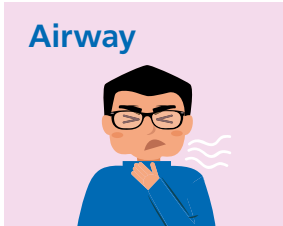
The change has been advised by the Chief Medical Officer, and has the support of the Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

What should I do when I attend for vaccination

If you have a history of allergies, particularly to other vaccines, or if you had an immediate reaction after your previous doses, you may be advised to stay for the 15 minutes. Please make sure you tell the vaccination centre. Note that a family history of allergies (or even anaphylaxis) is not a risk factor. Please also tell them if you have previously fainted following vaccination. Otherwise you will be able to leave the centre straight after your vaccine as long as you feel OK. You must not drive for 15 minutes after the vaccine – this is because of the risk of fainting.

What happens if I do experience allergic symptoms

Keep this flyer handy. You should look out for the following symptoms:



Airway

- persistent cough
- vocal changes (hoarse voice)
- swollen tongue causing difficulty swallowing



Breathing

- difficult or noisy breathing
- wheezing (like an asthma attack)



Consciousness

- feeling lightheaded or prolonged faint
- clammy skin
- confusion
- unresponsive/unconscious

These symptoms typically happen within 15 minutes of vaccination. If you experience any of these, call out for help and/or call 999 immediately (or ask someone to do this for you).

The following symptoms ON THEIR OWN are not anaphylaxis, but imply a more mild reaction:

- swollen lips, face or eyes
- itchy skin rash e.g. "hives", urticaria

If any of these symptoms occur and you need advice, contact 111 or your health professional.

Simple faints are much more common after vaccination.

If you do faint, stay flat on your back with your legs raised. If this doesn't make you feel better, then call for help.

Further information

You can report suspected side effects on the website using the QR code below or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

You can also read the product information leaflet for more details on your vaccine, including possible side effects, on the Coronavirus Yellow Card website.



<https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>