

COVID-19 VACCINE BULLETIN 2

Welcome to the second bulletin from the HSE National Immunisation Office which highlights changes in clinical guidance for the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Bulletins will be published every week or more frequently, if required.

COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna®



COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna® has been approved for use in Ireland. It is an mRNA vaccine.

The vaccine consists of 2 doses 28 days apart, each dose is 0.5ml and is administered by IM injection.

COVID-19 vaccine Moderna comes in a multi-dose vial and **does not** require dilution. Once it is thawed, as per instructions, the vaccine is drawn directly from the vial and administered. The vial contains up to 11 doses of vaccine. There should be no pooling of different vaccine vials.

[Read Clinical Guidance Here](#)

Updates on guidance for Comirnaty® (Pfizer/BioNTech) vaccine



The recommendations on the number of doses which can be obtained from a vial has been updated.

The diluted vial contains 2.25 ml if the correct volume of diluent has been used in accordance with the SmPC. If seven 0.3ml doses can be safely and accurately withdrawn from a diluted vial, they can be used as valid doses. There should be no pooling of different vaccine vials.

The dose interval of the vaccine has been extended and the recommended interval is now 21 to 28 days.

NIAC has updated the guidance on the minimum interval between doses. If the interval between the first and second dose is less than 21 days a further dose is not required. Doses given between 17 and 20 days is a valid dose, evidence on efficacy for a dose interval of less than 17 days is lacking but currently the recommendation is that a 3rd dose is not indicated.

Contraindication and precautions to Comirnaty® and COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna®

NIAC has updated their guidelines as follows:

People who have a history of an immediate allergy to any other vaccine or injectable medicine should seek advice from a relevant specialist about the risks versus the benefits of vaccination.

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Reminder regarding the administration of COVID-19 vaccines from multi-dose vials

- Vaccines should be drawn up at the site of administration i.e. the vaccination table
- Use the same needle and syringe to draw up and administer vaccine
- Do not prepare syringes in advance – there is no stability data for Comirnaty® and COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna® in pre-filled syringes



Close contacts and vaccination

Advice has been added in relation to people who have been identified as close contacts of a case of COVID-19

Community or outpatient setting:

Defer vaccination until the period of restriction of movements has ended to avoid exposing healthcare personnel.

(HCP) or other persons during the vaccination visit. This includes healthcare staff who are currently restricting their movements at home.

Residents of congregate healthcare settings (e.g. residential care facilities)

May be vaccinated, as it is likely this would not result in additional exposures.

HCP are already in close contact with residents and should employ appropriate infection prevention and control procedures. Asymptomatic individuals undergoing serial testing for COVID-19 e.g. staff in residential care facilities, may be vaccinated while awaiting the results of their tests.

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Transporting diluted vaccine up a flight of stairs

When vaccinating in congregate settings such as residential care facilities, care should be taken when transporting diluted Comirnaty® vials around the facility.

Dilution of Comirnaty® should take place in close proximity to the administration.

Diluted vials of Comirnaty® vaccine should not be transported up flights of stairs or at a distance from the vaccine is being administered.



Advice for women who are planning a pregnancy

It is not necessary to leave any interval after having the COVID-19 vaccine and becoming pregnant. If a woman becomes pregnant following the first dose, she should wait until 14 weeks or after to get the second dose.

Information for pregnant or breastfeeding women

The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and National Immunisation Advisory Committee have prepared a very informative FAQ and COVID-19 Vaccine Decision Aids for for pregnant or breastfeeding women and their doctors.

[Read It Here](#)

I am pregnant
Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

For most people, getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available is the safest choice. Although pregnant women are not specifically classified among the higher priority vaccine allocation groups, it may be available to you for other reasons, for example, if you are a healthcare or social care worker. For those who are pregnant, or considering pregnancy, this can be a difficult decision as COVID-19 vaccines have not yet been studied in pregnant and breastfeeding people.

This decision aid is intended to help you make an informed choice about whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccine before, during or after pregnancy.

What are my options?

Get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you **VS** Wait until more information is available about the vaccine in pregnancy

Summary

If you are pregnant and the COVID-19 vaccine is available to you, your options include:

- 1 Get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you
- 2 Wait until more information is available about the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy

- It is your choice whether or not you get the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy.
- COVID-19 may cause more harm in pregnant people than in people of the same age who are not pregnant.
- The COVID-19 vaccine, which is **not** a live vaccine, has not been studied in pregnant women and the risks are therefore not fully known. However, the risks of taking the vaccine when you are pregnant are thought to be small.
- When thinking about whether to get the vaccine or not, you should think about your own personal risk of getting COVID-19. If your personal risk is high, or there are many cases of COVID-19 in your community, it might make sense for you to get the vaccine when you are pregnant.
- If you choose to get the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy, you should get it when you are between 14 and 33 weeks pregnant.

What are the risks to a pregnant woman from COVID-19 infection?

- The risk of getting COVID-19 is similar in pregnant and non-pregnant women. Most pregnant women who are infected with COVID-19 will only experience mild to moderate symptoms.
- COVID-19 can be more dangerous for pregnant women. Pregnant women with symptomatic COVID-19 may be more likely to be admitted to hospital, to need care in an ICU, and to die when compared with non-pregnant women.
- There may be an increased rate of preterm birth and stillbirth among pregnant patients with COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms.

Logos: Irish Medicines in Pregnancy Service, ROTUNDA HOSPITAL DUBLIN, National Women & Infants Health Programme, National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC), INSTITUTE OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNAECOLOGISTS

Recommendations about COVID-19 vaccine are changing as more information becomes available so please check our [website](#) for the most up to date information.