

BRIEFING

9 April 2021

Update on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine for all staff

This briefing is to update all Trust staff following the press conferences held on 7 April 2021 by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation (JCVI).

The overwhelming message is that the benefits of having the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine far outweigh the risks. No element of the vaccination programme has been halted, but new guidance has been issued which we have summarised below, particularly focusing on the importance of attending your second appointment, and new guidance relating to first vaccines for the under 30s.

The safety and efficacy has been assessed by several different sets of independent experts on both the regulatory and clinical sides, both here and across Europe, which you will hopefully find reassuring. On a mass vaccination rollout of this scale, it is to be expected that there will be learning along the way and these rare and unusual events have been picked up early, analysed and acted on.

New guidance

New guidance has been issued for the use of the Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

This follows further reviews by the independent regulator, the MHRA, and the Commission for Human Medicines, of a very small number of people in the UK who have developed a rare blood-clotting condition since having the Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

The MHRA and Joint Committee for Vaccinations and Immunisations have emphasised that the risk of this condition is extremely small and that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks for the vast majority of people. They have recommended that:

- Everyone who has had the AstraZeneca vaccine should still have a second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, irrespective of age, unless they have had a blood clot or have an existing risk of thrombosis (blood clotting).
- People aged 30 and over (including health and social care workers) or who have a health condition that puts them at higher risk of severe Covid-19 disease should still be offered the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. The benefits in protecting them against the serious consequences of COVID-19 far outweigh any risk of this rare condition.
- People aged 18-29 who do not have a health condition that puts them at higher risk of severe Covid-19 disease will be offered an alternative Covid-19 vaccine where available. This has been recommended as a precaution as people under 30 are at less risk from

Covid-19 and not because they are considered to be at particular risk of developing the rare blood clot.

- People under 30 can still choose to have the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine if this will mean they can be protected more quickly and they have been made aware of the guidance.

Please find below a link to the latest Public Health England leaflet to help answer any questions you or your service users may have about blood clotting, along with some other information that you may find helpful. Information has also been produced for healthcare professionals and we are working to support all staff working in our vaccination services to answer the questions they are likely to get about this.

- Public Health England's leaflet on [COVID-19 vaccination and blood clotting](#)
- The [JCVI statement on the use of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine: 7 April 2021](#)
- The [MHRA's advice on a possible link between Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and blood clots](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: blood clotting information for healthcare professionals](#)

It is clearly up to every individual to decide whether to have their vaccination when offered, but please remember the very serious risk that Covid-19 presents and the protection the vaccine offers against this.

If staff have any questions about this updated guidance on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine please email our Covid-19 inbox at corona.virus@nhs.net and we'll ensure they get to the best person who can help answer them.

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