Choose Well: COVID-19 FAQs

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Safe behaviours save lives and help to return life to normal

This document answers some of the most frequently asked COVID-19 questions we get at Birmingham City Council. Choose a topic to view:

- Vaccinations
- Booster Jabs
- Ventilation
- Face Coverings
- COVID-19 Testing
- Stay at Home if Unwell
- NHS COVID-19 App
- Handwashing

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Being vaccinated will **help protect you from becoming very ill with COVID-19** and reduces the likelihood of being hospitalised as a result of COVID-19. The vaccine has helped to save many lives.

Choose well: VACCINATIONS

You can still catch COVID-19 after a vaccination, what is the point?

If I am pregnant or planning to become pregnant, can I get a vaccine?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are recommended in pregnancy. Vaccination is the best way to protect against the known risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy, including admission to intensive care and premature birth.

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The vaccine was developed really fast, is it safe?

The vaccine has gone through all the necessary safety checks. It was developed quickly because **thousands of scientists around the globe were working together**, with plenty of funding and years of previous scientific discoveries.

Yes. Evidence shows that **people who are fully vaccinated have better protection against COVID-19** infections compared to unvaccinated people who have had COVID-19.

I have already had COVID-19, do I still need a vaccine?

I have been vaccinated, why do I need to still be cautious?

The vaccine reduces the spread of COVID-19 but cannot completely prevent it. You still need to be cautious despite your vaccinated status.

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The booster vaccine will help **provide additional protection against getting seriously ill** from COVID-19.

Why do I need a booster vaccine?

What type of vaccine will the booster be?

In line with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and government advice, you will be given a booster dose of either the **Pfizer or Moderna vaccine**. You will be offered the right vaccine for you; this may be the same or different from the vaccines you had before.

Choose well: BOOSTER JAB

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Can I have the booster jab if I am not double vaccinated?

No. You need to have 2 doses of a COVID vaccine before receiving your booster dose. **You are still able to book your 1st or 2nd dose through the NHS booking service** while the booster programme is ongoing.

The common side effects are the same for all COVID-19 vaccines and include:
- Tenderness at the injection site
- Tiredness
- Headache and other general aches

Will there be any side effects from the booster?

Can I get the flu and COVID-19 booster vaccine at the same time?

Yes. The flu and COVID-19 booster can be given on the same day for people that are eligible for both. It is best to get your vaccinations as soon as possible and get fully protected.

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Ventilation is the process of **introducing fresh air into indoor spaces** and removing stale air. You should ventilate when meeting indoors as it can **reduce your risk of COVID-19 by 70%.**

What is ventilation & do I need to ventilate?

Why is ventilation so important?

COVID-19 can be spread through the air when we breathe. Ventilation allows the virus to escape your indoor environment, reducing the spread to yourself and others.

Choose well: VENTILATION

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How should I ventilate a room using *Natural ventilation?*

You create natural ventilation when you **open windows and doors** at opposite sides of your room to provide good airflow. You can use air vents when possible. Do this **regularly for 10 minutes, during, before and after visitors.**

- At Home: **before and after people come into your home.**
- When Travelling: open windows on **public transport** and in other public places when possible to allow fresh air in and old air out.

When should I ventilate a room?

How should I ventilate a room using *Mechanical ventilation?*

Mechanical ventilation systems allow fresh air in and remove old air. They do not recirculate indoor air. **Leave extractor fans on in bathrooms, toilets and kitchen areas** with the door closed after someone has been in the room.

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Wearing a face covering **helps to prevent you from unknowingly spreading COVID-19** since many people have no symptoms.

What are the benefits of wearing a face covering?

Should I wear a face covering?

If you can please do so. Remember, it can take some time to get used to a new habit and although seeing others doing it and having rules can help, we have had nearly 2 years of practice. **Wear a mask to keep each other safe.**

**Choose well:
WEAR A FACE COVERING**

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Which face covering should I wear?

There are many types of face coverings. Although some may be more protective than others, they all help to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Use a face covering which is **made from at least 2 layers of material.**

We can work together by **being role models who wear face coverings**, patiently encouraging others and sharing the correct information.

What can I do to help people wear face coverings?

How do I wear a face covering properly?

A face covering should **cover your nose, mouth and chin** and be comfortable. It is very important to keep it on when required or in crowded environments.

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Choose well: TESTING

No. **A vaccination cannot cause a positive LFD or PCR test result** as the vaccines do not contain the COVID-19 virus.

Can a vaccination cause a positive test result?

I have COVID-19 symptoms, which test should I take?

If you have COVID-19 symptoms **you should take a PCR test**. These are more sensitive tests for confirming if people with symptoms are currently infected with COVID-19. Test results can take a few days as they have to be sent off to a lab.

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I don't have symptoms, why should I take a test?

About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others. Rapid lateral flow (LFD) tests can quickly check if you have COVID-19 without any symptoms. If you have symptoms, always use the PCR test.

Test before and after you **socialise with other people** and when you enter **busy or high-risk spaces** to make sure you keep everyone and yourself safe.

How regularly should I test?

I am vaccinated, do I still need to test?

Even if you're vaccinated, **you can still catch COVID-19 and pass it on**. Doing regular LFD tests helps to protect yourself and others.

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Staying at home until you feel better **reduces the risk that you will pass on any illness** to your community.

Why should I stay at home if I am feeling under the weather?

I have taken a test, and its not COVID-19, should I still stay home?

Yes, if possible. If you are feeling unwell but your COVID-19 test is negative, you may still have an illness which could be passed on to other people.

Choose well: STAY HOME IF YOU ARE UNWELL

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I think it's just a regular cold?

Common colds can still make vulnerable people very ill. Staying home will help to reduce the burden on our health services.

Take a PCR test if you have COVID-19 symptoms. You should self-isolate until you receive a negative result.

I feel unwell which COVID test do I need?

I am vaccinated, I can't spread COVID-19 so it's fine for me go out?

Being fully vaccinated is a fantastic way to prevent serious illness from COVID-19. **It does not completely prevent you from catching and spreading COVID-19**, so even if you are vaccinated you should still stay home if you are feeling unwell.

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The NHS COVID-19 app **helps the NHS understand where and how quickly the virus is spreading** by using contact tracing (identifying anyone who has been in close contact with an infectious person).

**Choose well:
COVID-19 APP**

What is the NHS COVID-19 app used for?

Do I still need to use the NHS COVID-19 app if I've had a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The NHS COVID-19 app is the fastest way to see if you're at risk from COVID-19, even when fully vaccinated. The app will let you know what actions you can take to protect those around you.

COVID-19 is still spreading CHOOSE WELL

Will the NHS COVID-19 app be used for location tracking?

The NHS COVID-19 app cannot track your location and **does not have access to any personal data.** The app uses Bluetooth to record your distance from other phones that have the app.

Yes. The NHS COVID-19 app is available in England and Wales. The app will also notify you of any close contacts to positive COVID-19 cases in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey and Gibraltar. **You do not need to download a different app.**

Can I use the NHS COVID-19 app in other parts of the UK?

I have been identified as a 'close contact', what does this mean?

A close contact means you've been within two metres of someone with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more recently. **The NHS COVID-19 app will advise you on what to do next.**

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You should wash your hands:
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **Before** and **after** being in a public place
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone who is sick

When should I wash my hands?

How should I wash my hands?

Wash your hands often using:
- **Soap and water** for at least 20 seconds **or**
- **Hand sanitizer** with at least 60% alcohol

Choose well: HANDWASHING

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Is hand sanitiser effective against COVID-19?

Yes. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers with at least 60% alcohol will be able to kill viruses, including COVID-19. When possible, use soap and water.

Keeping hands clean is **one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs** to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water.

Why is it important to have good hand hygiene?

Do I need a timer when scrubbing my hands?

You should wash your hands for the amount of time it takes to **sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice** – this is around 20 seconds.

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