

COVID and Flu Vaccination Support Bulletin

Issued to:

Staff delivering COVID-19 and Flu Vaccination Programmes

Issue : Christmas 2021

Introduction

Welcome to our special Christmas edition of the vaccination bulletin. In this edition we bring you a summary of key recent changes to guidance, learning from a recent incident and a summary of guidance around the suspension of the 15-minute post-vaccination observation time.

At the end of the bulletin we have included some Christmas fun to keep you all going over the busy festive period. On behalf of everyone in the vaccination team we would like to wish you a safe and restful festive period, no matter what you are doing.



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Guidance updates

The following have all recently been updated:

- [COVID-19 greenbook chapter 14a \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk) – this is currently being updated yet again to reflect JCVI announcements about children and young people [JCVI update on advice for COVID-19 vaccination of children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) and pregnant women (see below)
- PGDs (15/12/21 and 16/12/21) and protocols (16/12/21 and 17/12/21) for Comirnaty® (Pfizer) and Spikevax® (Moderna) vaccines: [Coronavirus » Legal mechanisms \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk) – these are also undergoing a further update
- [COVID-19 vaccine information for healthcare practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk) (21/12/21)

We genuinely understand that it is extremely difficult to keep up to date, especially when working under the huge pressure that the acceleration of the booster programme has brought, but the PGDs and protocols are legal mechanisms, and must be read and understood before being signed and used by staff, as well as being referred to during the vaccination session.

Quickly finding the answers to questions in any of the listed documents can, we know, be very challenging but some familiarity with the layout and broad contents will help you. No one can realistically learn every detail. We hope that the bulletin summaries also make this task a little easier. Please let us know if there are ways of presenting the information that are particularly useful to you. And, of course, contact CARS if you need advice or support with any clinical queries or incidents.

The changes to the COVID-19 vaccines for healthcare practitioners document will be highlighted in more detail in the New Year edition of the bulletin.

Other changes and new developments

- **Myocarditis and pericarditis guidance**

The timescale has changed in the document [Myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination: clinical management guidance for healthcare professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk), bringing the recommendations for N antibody testing **down to 10 days**. This was previously 2 weeks, the definition of possible vaccine-associated myocarditis or pericarditis having now been refined in response to additional evidence. Individuals who test positive for N antibody are likely to be well protected and therefore the benefit from a second dose is likely to be more limited.

- **COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy**

The JCVI has recommended that pregnant women are now classed as a clinical risk group (cohort 6) as there is growing evidence of an increasing risk of serious illness and admission from the disease as each new variant has emerged. [Pregnant women urged to come forward for COVID-19 vaccination - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pregnant-women-urged-to-come-forward-for-covid-19-vaccination). The Green Book is currently being updated and will reflect this. Pregnant women of any age should now receive

Two primary doses of vaccine, a minimum of 8 weeks' apart and a booster dose not sooner than 3m after completion of their primary course. An interval of 4 weeks after infection should be allowed.

- **Updated clinical assessment questions**

A new update to the screening questions on Outcomes4Health has been rolled out. Some additional questions have been added and practitioners are reminded that these questions are part of the legal record of vaccination and need to be asked.

Learning from vaccine incidents

In this bulletin we reflect on some learning gained from a recent vaccine incident:

What happened?

A group of patients were given vaccine after the use-by date. The provider sought advice from the manufacturer and made the decision to revaccinate the affected people.

Once CARS were made aware of the incident, they asked the provider to pause vaccination until advice was obtained from the national team.

What went well?

The provider was very open and honest about the incident, they provided clear and effective communication about the situation. They provided a thorough investigation of what happened and applied logical and evidence-based thought to the decision to revaccinate. Patient care and safety always came first in the decision making.

The CARS team sought national advice – this agreed with the provider decision.

What went less well?

The advice received from the manufacturer was vague and not in the format usually received. Stability data specific to the incident was not included and the provider was directed to standard UKHSA written vaccination incident guidance.

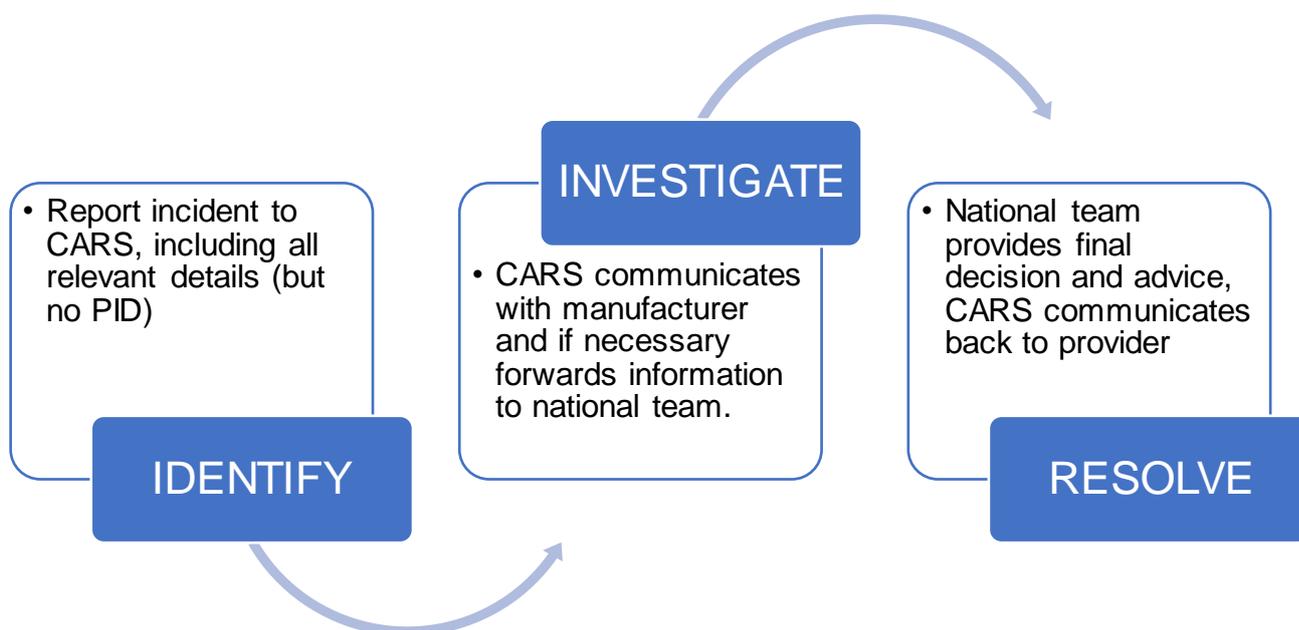
The decision to revaccinate was therefore made without the involvement of the CARS team and was made by the provider rather than the national team. No reactive communications statement was prepared in case of media interest.

Revaccination is not often advised for COVID-19 vaccines. The CARS team initially responded to the incident by asking the provider to pause the revaccination while further advice was sought, but this could have caused a loss of confidence in the programme by the vaccine recipients.

What learning was gained?

The provider has changed their policy on handling of defrosted vaccine as the original incident occurred because of confusion between labelling of the “manufacturer’s expiry date” on the vial and the “use-by date” (31 days after defrost). **Please remind your staff to check the use-by date on the box as well as the expiry date on the vial”.**

Vaccine incidents involving vials used after the “use-by” date should be reported to CARS who will consult with the manufacturer. **CARS has adjusted its process to remain involved at all stages of the process.** This enables CARS to have a handle on information provided and ensures timely communication with the national team.



Moderna update

It has recently been highlighted that Moderna have a tool on their website to assess if vaccine is still usable following cold-chain excursion. The national team are currently reviewing this tool and, in the meantime, we would ask all vaccine providers to **continue to follow the national SOP** in relation to the reporting of vaccine incidents and not to use the tool for decision making purposes.

Suspension of the 15-minute wait

The suspension of the 15-minute wait is a **temporary, off-label deviation** from the requirements of the mRNA vaccine licenses, following a review by the UK Chief Medical Officers of both the relative risks of post-vaccination anaphylaxis and the population risk of slower delivery of the extended booster programme. As mentioned previously the **PGDs and protocols have now been updated** to include this change to try and increase footfall at vaccine sites across the country. Anyone with a personal history of allergy will still have to wait, though, so observers will still need to be watching and wiping!

All vaccine recipients must be:

- OBESERVED FOR IMMEDIATE POST-VACCINATION REACTIONS whilst they are receiving any verbal post vaccination information and exiting the centre.
- GIVEN VERBAL INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE REACTIONS, INCLUDING ANAPHYLAXIS, AND WHAT TO DO IF THESE OCCUR - they should know how - and be able - to access immediate healthcare advice in the event of displaying any symptoms
 - Legal advice obtained at the time of PGD and protocol preparation was clear that this should be an active process on the part of staff - vaccine recipients should ideally also be HANDED, or at least TOLD where in the venue to pick up a copy of the [Waiting after your COVID-19 vaccination flyer - Health Publications](#) (copies can be ordered for free).
- ADVISED NOT TO DRIVE FOR 15 MINUTES regardless of which vaccine they have received

The 15-minute observation period should NOT be suspended in every case:

- In some situations, for example a home visit, a responsible adult may need to be present for the 15-minute period.
- Patients with a history of allergy should be OBSERVED as per the recommendations in the Green Book ch.14a, Table 5: currently 15 mins if risk-assessment places them in the green column, 30 minutes if they fall into the amber or red columns.
- Patients with a history of allergic response to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine should be OBSERVED as per the recommendations in the flow chart on p 33 or chapter 14a (15 – 30 minutes depending upon risk assessment)

Treatments for COVID-19 disease

- Supplies – Covid Medicines Delivery Units (CMDUs)

We are awaiting final confirmation of all CMDU sites. The national team are pulling together a directory which they intend to circulate to systems widely through central comms. This will have a generic email address for each CMDU and a telephone number.

Meanwhile, please contact the PMO with any enquiries about this, marking your email 'for the attention of the regional CMDU team'. CARS is unable to help with CMDU issues.

- Vaccination after treatment

Monoclonal antibodies - no specific interval is required between receipt of these products and COVID-19 vaccination, or vice versa.

Antiviral medicines - response to COVID-19 vaccine will not be affected by prior or recent receipt of anti-viral medication.

Steroids - the response to these vaccines should not be affected by any short-term steroid treatment used in the management of COVID-19 infection.

Christmas Dingbats

How many of these words and phrases associated with Christmas can you work out from these dingbats?

<p>NIG  HT</p>		<p>Spear Pepper Garden</p> <p>Cottage Apple Shepherd</p>	<p>PPPPPPP</p> 
<p>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO PQRSTUVWXYZ</p> <p>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO PQRSTUVWXYZ</p>	 <p>Now Now Now</p>	<p>XMAS</p>	<p>S  EL</p>
<p>A3  A4</p>	<p>CCCCCCCC</p> <p>Festive</p>	<p>TOFRANKUCH</p>	<p>Mistletoe</p> <p>XXX</p>

Making the Most of Your Down-Time

In the spirit of the season this month's bulletin brings you a round-up of ways to escape the vaccination programme and all talk of the virus with some pure Christmas magic. Grab a hot chocolate, crack open the Quality Street and enjoy...

In the mood for... laughs?

Watch: the classic comedy of Only Fools and Horses. Yes, it's on all year round, yes, you've seen it a hundred times but that doesn't stop it making you giggle when Del Boy falls backwards through the bar.

Play: Goopy Louie. This is a frankly disgusting family board game in the time-honoured game tradition of 'doing something as many times as possible before the timer goes off'. Except the thing you do is pull 'goeys' out of Louie's nose without making his brain pop out. Pure silly escapism.



In the mood for... Christmas classics?

Watch: Home Alone. This classic Christmas comedy has been remade with a modern cast for 2021, but don't watch that one. Watch Macaulay Culkin at the peak of his career devising ridiculous, dangerous, and frankly irresponsible traps for two hapless burglars to protect the home his parents have inexplicably left him in despite him being a very small child. Don't put your safeguarding hat on and enjoy. There's a sequel with a cameo from Donald Trump, should you get hooked!

Play: Monopoly. It's the classic family game and you'll be fighting about whether Grandad stole from the bank for years. Just make sure you have plenty of drinks and snacks to hand, it's a long one.

In the mood for... a busman's holiday?

Watch: ER. An excellent American series based in the emergency room (A&E) of a fictional Chicago hospital that ran for years and covered every subject matter going. Featuring some surprise celeb appearances from the likes of Ewan Macgregor, Thandiwe Newton and Aaron Paul, this series is perfect for long haul tv escapism (and shouting at the medical errors).

Play: Operation. The surgeons among us will always hold the advantage here but let's face it, who doesn't want to pretend to save lives while fishing butterflies out of

the stomach of the cartoon person without setting the alarm off. Just don't forget the batteries...

Christmas Wordsearch

How many of these words and phrases associated with the Vaccination Programme can you find? There are 15 in total....

Y	Q	W	Z	T	K	X	J	F	G	T	P	H	C	H	D	K	F	T	K
B	I	O	N	T	E	C	H	B	J	J	P	E	J	U	T	H	M	L	B
D	V	W	D	E	N	F	V	V	G	G	O	X	F	O	R	D	O	L	I
W	A	L	K	I	N	Z	X	A	F	K	G	V	S	G	I	W	D	R	C
B	Y	E	E	X	X	B	I	F	C	P	T	R	S	I	U	B	E	B	V
Q	P	F	I	Z	E	R	H	E	O	C	R	F	E	T	M	F	R	X	O
G	T	W	A	A	W	L	F	A	V	B	I	O	L	E	U	V	N	Q	B
N	Z	C	B	N	P	B	E	P	I	L	E	N	G	A	N	V	A	G	L
R	A	R	Q	J	X	U	S	P	D	G	N	P	A	R	F	B	I	B	T
V	P	S	J	R	E	M	X	D	M	S	J	R	T	T	A	K	O	M	G
O	S	I	T	H	C	R	B	L	M	Y	Y	I	U	I	I	M	Y	O	D
W	R	A	O	R	J	N	B	C	M	J	D	M	U	I	H	O	M	A	K
O	N	M	U	Y	A	A	Q	B	K	R	G	A	B	P	R	X	N	E	X
W	H	E	F	V	I	Z	X	R	O	P	R	R	I	O	K	I	T	J	K
W	R	K	G	O	C	J	E	S	G	O	S	Y	K	M	C	J	J	W	P
P	I	X	J	G	F	K	J	N	Z	U	S	N	S	U	C	B	H	T	Z
C	L	Y	C	N	T	O	W	N	E	G	X	T	C	X	N	R	T	P	M
Z	C	K	V	G	F	W	Y	H	K	C	O	F	E	K	D	J	Q	K	D
X	V	W	I	Y	Y	N	L	F	Q	S	A	R	C	R	C	I	R	O	N
S	F	H	I	A	K	D	E	V	E	R	G	R	E	E	N	U	Y	U	Z

And Finally... A Twist on an Old Classic!

On the first day of Christmas my true
love sent to me

Another Green Book Update...

On the second day of Christmas my
true love sent to me

Two vaccinators

And another Green book update...

On the third day of Christmas my true
love sent to me

Three PGDs

Two vaccinators

And another Green book update...

On the fourth day of Christmas my
true love sent to me

Four cold chain breaches

Three PGDs

Two vaccinators

And another Green book update...

Twelve Queueing patients

Eleven Pfizer Vials

Ten housebound people

Nine AZ clinics

Eight needle phobics

Seven fainting patients

Six Moderna Boosters

Five sharps bins

Four cold chain breaches

Three PGDs

Two vaccinators

And another Green book update...



Contact us

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Disclaimer: While the information in this document is considered correct at the date of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information

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