

## Patient Information on COVID Vaccine

### What vaccines are available?

- There are 3 vaccines approved for use in UK which offer protection against COVID -19: Oxford/Astra Zeneca; Pfizer BioNtech; the Moderna vaccine
- None of the vaccines are live. Oxford AstraZeneca uses real virus that has been inactivated to cause immune response (similar to flu vaccine).
- They are considered safe in rheumatology patients even in those taking medications that suppress immune system.

### Should I take the vaccine?

We encourage **all** patients to have the vaccine when it is offered. There are a few circumstances that you should **NOT** get a Pfizer or Moderna Vaccine:

1. If you have severe **unexplained** allergic reactions (e.g if you need to carry EpiPen) or severe reactions to multiple drugs.
2. If you have previous allergy to **certolizumab (Cimza)**
3. If you had a reaction to the first Pfizer vaccine you should not have Moderna vaccine and vice versa.

In these cases you should take **Oxford/Astra Zeneca** vaccine instead.

### When will I have the vaccine?

- The government and JCVI have set out priority groups for vaccination.
- We currently cannot influence or provide a date for your vaccine. This will come centrally or from your GP.

### What should I do with my medications for my arthritis?

- You do not need to stop your medication (including steroid) for the vaccines.
- Stopping medication may risk a flare. This may in turn increase the risk of COVID-19.

### What happens with shielding guidance after vaccination?

- You should continue to follow public health rules on shielding and social distancing even after the vaccine.

### What are the common side effects of the vaccine?

- Local reactions/pain at the injection site (usually without redness or swelling)
- Fatigue, headache or mild fever may be experienced

### Should I have the vaccine if I am pregnant, breastfeeding or waiting a surgery?

- Please speak to your family doctor

For more information, please visit: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/living-with-arthritis/vaccinations/>

The above information is taken from : [COVID-19 vaccination and MSK \(arma.uk.net\)](https://arma.uk.net/) – dated 27 January 2021