



Covid-19 vaccination: Advice from NICaN oncologists and haematologists. 08 Jan 2021.

This leaflet is intended to address questions that people undergoing treatment for cancer have asked at our clinics about the Covid-19 vaccines.

The government recommends that people who are at higher risk of becoming seriously ill due to COVID-19 infection should have the vaccine. Certain categories of patients have been prioritised to be offered the vaccine. This includes people with lowered immunity due to disease such as cancer, and due to treatment, such as, chemotherapy or radiotherapy. It also includes people affected by blood cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma).

In Northern Ireland there are two types of COVID-19 vaccine to be used once they are approved. They both require two doses to provide the best protection. If offered a Covid vaccine, you should have no concerns about which vaccine is offered.

Some people with cancer and blood disorders have lowered immunity and might not respond as well as others to vaccination. At present, there is no information on how well people with lowered immunity respond to the COVID-19 vaccines. However, there are no particular safety concerns about using the vaccines in people with lowered immunity. The vaccines are **not** live and cannot cause infections.

We have no concerns about people who are receiving chemotherapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy or radiotherapy having their Covid-19 vaccination.

We advise that when possible, vaccines are given during the week before the next dose of chemotherapy. **After having the vaccine, it is important to carry on taking appropriate measures to reduce your risk of infection** these include; practise social distancing, wear a face covering, wash your hands carefully and frequently and follow the current guidance www.nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus.

It is expected that vaccine distribution will be managed via your GP January and February 2021. Talk to your GP if you have any concerns about the vaccine and what it means for you. If you have not heard from your GP by the end of February 2021 please contact them about the vaccine.

Useful information

- Please also refer to the leaflet: **Covid 19 Vaccination a guide for adults** available on the PHA website <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-adults>. This leaflet will also be available in GP surgeries and pharmacies. PHA also provides a useful question and answer section on their website (search [COVID-19 Vaccination Programme questions and answers](#)).
- See also NICaN: <https://nican.hscni.net/> for updates to Covid-19 information.