



Message from Dr Nicola Lang, Director of Public Health for H&F Council

The first Covid-19 vaccine was [approved for use](#) in the UK on 2 December. This is great news for us all as it gives us hope. We understand there are some concerns about the vaccine, particularly following rumours circulating on social media. Here we give some background on the vaccine and address some of those rumours.

The vaccine is an mRNA (a type of genetic code) vaccine. It works by teaching the immune system to target key viral proteins, so that the immune system has “ready-made” defences against the virus (called antibodies). The vaccine is given as two injections into the top of the arm. The injections are given three weeks apart and immunity is thought to develop a week after the second vaccine. This immunity means that those who have had the vaccine are much less likely to catch Covid-19 (studies have shown it is 95% effective) and much less likely to pass it on to friends and family. For more information see the [NHS advice](#) on the vaccine.

For some people, side effects of the vaccine may include having a painful, heavy feeling in the arm where you had your injection, which typically lasts 1-2 days, or feeling tired, headache, general aches, or mild flu like symptoms. These symptoms are part of the immune response. As a precaution we monitor each person for any possible reaction to the vaccine for 15 minutes after receiving it.

Let me now address some of the rumours about the vaccine.

Myth1: The COVID-19 vaccine can cause disease

We have been asked many times whether the vaccine can cause COVID-19 disease? The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine does not contain whole or live virus, so it cannot cause COVID-19 disease.

Myth 2: There has not been enough testing of the COVID-19 vaccine

All the usual extensive trials in vaccine development were undertaken. The Phase 3 trials of the Pfizer vaccine, which is the last phase before a drug or vaccine can be taken into the market, involved 43,000 participants.

Myth 3: The COVID-19 vaccine contains animal products

There have been some rumours that the vaccine may contain animal products, such as porcine substances, foetal cell lines or egg. We can confirm that the vaccine does not contain any animal substances or was not made using old foetal cell lines. The full list of ingredients in the Pfizer vaccine can be found on the UK medicine regulator’s website [here](#).

With many sources available it can be difficult to know what to believe. The government’s [webpage](#) contains helpful information on the vaccine. We are proud to have started vaccinating our residents in Hammersmith & Fulham and are hopeful the vaccine will enable us to enjoy a brighter 2021.