# DIAVERUM

# Vaccines are safe, efficient and save lives

Questions and answers to help everyone see that the benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks of getting COVID-19

# Introduction

The end of the pandemic is dependent on countries around the world achieving "herd immunity". That's achieved when the number of individuals who are immune to COVID-19 is sufficient to prevent widespread, ongoing transmission within their communities.

Vaccines are, therefore, key to achieving "herd immunity" and ending the pandemic. They are safe, efficient and save lives.

**Our ambition at Diaverum is that all patients and staff take the vaccine when that's available for them.**

While you wait your turn to take the vaccine, we have prepared a set of questions and answers that will help everyone see that the benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks of getting the illness.

**References**

- Kidney Care UK
- www.who.int
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/ 2019-ncov/vaccines

## 1. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is caused by a new coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2. It was first identified in late 2019. It is very infectious and can lead to severe respiratory disease and a few cases of death.

Common symptoms are cough, fever, headaches, upset stomach and loss of taste and smell.

COVID-19 can affect people in different ways:

- some may not have any symptoms at all;
- some may only have mild symptoms;
- some may feel very tired, have aching muscles, diarrhoea and vomiting, fever and confusion;
- a small number may have a severe disease and may need to go into hospital, or even end up in intensive care or pass away.

**There is no cure for COVID-19 although some newly tested treatments may help to reduce the risk of complications.**

Vaccination offers safe and effective protection from infection with COVID-19.

## 2. What is vaccination?

**Vaccination is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases, before they come into contact with the specific disease.** It uses your body's natural defences to build resistance to specific infections and makes your immune system stronger.

Vaccines train your immune system to create antibodies by exposing it to components of the infectious agent, e.g. a virus, just as it does when it is exposed to a disease. These components cannot cause a disease themselves.

## 3. How does the vaccine work?

Vaccines reduce the risk of people getting COVID-19 by working with your body's natural defences to build protection.
When you get the vaccine, your immune system responds by:

- recognising the invading virus;
- producing antibodies (antibodies are proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight disease);
- remembering the disease and how to fight it. If you then are exposed to COVID-19 in the future, your immune system can quickly destroy it before you become unwell.

There are different types of COVID-19 vaccine, with most requiring two doses to provide the best protection. **COVID-19 vaccines are given by an injection into a muscle by a trained health-care professional.**

### 4. Is the vaccine safe and effective?

Any vaccine will have to pass stringent safety tests before they are approved, and are regularly reassessed once they are introduced.

The COVID-19 vaccines have been tested in some of the largest clinical trials that have ever been performed with vaccines, involving tens of thousands of individuals. No serious side effects have been detected in these trials.

The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks of getting the illness.

**All COVID-19 vaccinations have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.** They save lives by reducing significantly the number of severe, moderate and mild cases, as well as hospitalisation and outpatient treatments.

### 5. Does the speed at which the vaccines have been developed mean they are not safe?

Before any COVID-19 vaccine can be used, they must pass all the same safety tests and provide the same level of results to the country regulator as for any other type of vaccine.

**Regulatory authorities have examined the safety of the new COVID-19 vaccines in great detail before they were approved.**

### 6. Why should I have the COVID-19 vaccine?

Coronavirus can affect anyone. If you are an older adult and or have a long-term health condition, COVID-19 can be very serious and in some cases fatal.

There are some groups of people that are more at risk of becoming severely unwell. Renal patients are in this group as their illness may put them at risk of being seriously unwell. **That's why Diaverum is working closely with national health services around the world to make sure dialysis patients are assigned the highest priority for COVID-19 vaccination.**

### 7. Who cannot have the vaccine?

A very small number of people cannot have the vaccine – this includes people who have specific severe allergies and are prone to develop allergic shock.

**People who are less than 16 years old, pregnant and breastfeeding need to be assessed before getting the vaccine.**

### 8. Will the vaccine protect me?

The COVID-19 vaccination can greatly reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. It may take a week or two for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of the vaccine, but you will not reach full protection before you have taken all doses (in most cases two).

**Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective** – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having the vaccine, but they should get less severe symptoms.

### 9. Does the vaccine have side effects?

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. The most common side effects are a low-level fever, or pain or redness at the injection site. They are signs that the vaccine is effective and that your immune system is starting to build up a defence against COVID-19. Mild reactions should go away on their own within a few days.

**Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you still need to have the second dose.** Although you may get some protection from the first dose, only after the second dose will you obtain long-lasting protection against the virus.

### 10. Will the vaccine interact with any other medicines?

**There is no evidence that vaccines interact with other medicines.** Speak to you doctor if you are worried and they will advise you if there is anything to be concerned about.

### 11. Can the new RNA vaccines change my genes?

**No,** there is no possibility whatsoever that the new RNA vaccines, developed by Pfizer and Moderna, can change the genes in your body.

### 12. I have had COVID-19; do I still need the vaccine?

**Yes,** you should take it, as it is still important to have the vaccine if you have had the virus, since the infection may not give you long lasting protection from COVID-19.

### 13. I have had my flu vaccine; do I need the COVID-19 vaccine as well?

**The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19.** As you are eligible for both vaccines, you should have them both, but normally separated by at least a week.

### 14. Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

**You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine** but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination has been administered.

### 15. Can I give COVID-19 to anyone, after I have had the vaccine?

**The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection.**

We do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus. It is important to continue to follow the local and international guidance.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- maintain physical distancing;
- wear a face mask;
- wash your hands carefully and frequently;
- follow the current guidance.

# Remember

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

Even after you take the vaccine, it is important that you:
- continue to follow social distancing guidance;
- continue to wear masks;
- continue to wash your hand frequently.

# DIAVERUM

## Life Enhancing Renal Care

Diaverum is a leading global provider in renal care services, serving almost 40,000 patients with 6 million treatments annually. The company's core service is haemodialysis but it also provides a broad portfolio of treatments ranging from preventive care, peritoneal dialysis and home care to patient care coordination and transplantation services. Diaverum employs more than 12,000 employees and operates more than 430 clinics in 24 countries globally. Diaverum has its head office in Malmö, Sweden.

Diaverum *Country*
*Address*
*Address*
*Phone*
*E-mail*
**ww.diaverum.com**