**Covid-19 Information Update Issue 14 (updates from previous Bulletin in yellow)**

**Covid Information Champion update** - The number of coronavirus cases in Hertfordshire is falling but now is not the time to get complacent. We must continue to play our part to stop the spread. Thanks to the work of GP practices, hospitals, pharmacies and our larger vaccination sites, more than **700,000** people have received at least one vaccine dose in Hertfordshire and west Essex.

**FAQ Resources -** There is a huge amount of resources you can access to get the correct information on coronavirus and the vaccines. False information is often being shared online which can lead to some serious consequences. The Government has created a SHARE checklist [**Click Here**](https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/) to help and protect you from false information online. Some of the top FAQ’s are answered below:

* **Does the vaccine affect fertility? -**There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility. There is more information in the Questions and Answers about pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [**Click Here**](https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-womens-health/covid-19-vaccines-and-pregnancy/covid-19-vaccines-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding/)
* **Is it safe to have the vaccine if I am pregnant? -**The latest advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is that COVID-19 vaccines should be offered to pregnant women at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group. There have been no specific safety concerns identified with any brand of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines in relation to pregnancy.

There is more data surrounding the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines and pregnancy, so these vaccines will be offered to pregnant women where available.

Women should discuss the benefits and risks of having the vaccine with their healthcare professional and reach a joint decision based on individual circumstances. Women should not stop breastfeeding in order to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Women trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

**Does the AstraZeneca vaccine cause blood clots? -** The UK’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has carried out a detailed review of reports of an extremely rare blood clotting problem affecting a small number of people who have had the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine. It's not yet clear why it affects some people, but the risk is extremely low – around 4 people develop this condition for every million doses of AZ vaccine given. You can read the latest guidance from Public Health England [**Click Here**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/977653/PHE_COVID-19_AZ_vaccination_guide.pdf)For people under 30 without other health conditions, who are at lower risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, it's currently advised that it's preferable to have an alternative to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine when you are eligible.

* **Why do I need a second dose? -** You need both doses of the vaccine to gain maximum protection from the virus. This is given about 12 weeks after the first dose. Even after you have received your first or second vaccine, you must continue to follow the latest government guidance on social distancing, washing your hands and wearing a face mask (unless you are exempt).

*You can find more information about the vaccination programme, including more FAQs and resources for adults with learning disabilities and resources in different languages and formats* [**Click Here**](https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/information-and-resources)

**Walk-in vaccination sessions for frontline health and social care staff -** Eligible frontline social care and health staff aged over 30 who have yet to book their vaccine can **Book Online** [**Click Here**](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) or walk into several vaccination centres when they are open without the need for an appointment. Opening times for staff are available [**Click Here**](https://www.hct.nhs.uk/covid-19/walk-in-vaccination-times-for-health-and-social-care-staff-1st-and-2nd-doses-of-covid-19-vaccination-astra-zeneca-until-end-of-april/) Staff must bring their NHS number, proof of ID and vaccination card (if they have already received their first dose). Frontline Health and social care workers who are 11 weeks post their first AstraZeneca vaccination and who don’t currently have a booked appointment for their second dose, can use the walk-in sessions to get their second jab.

**Unpaid Carers -** Unpaid Carers are being reminded to register with their GP practice as a Carer. This means they canbook their COVID-19 vaccine with their GP and get relevant information, support and advicefrom healthcare services.

**Testing -** Twice weekly **Rapid Testing** enables us to find cases and prevent the spread of infection. Getting into the habit of twice weekly testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to keep each other safe and alongside the vaccine ensure we can continue to ease our way out of lockdown. You can also book a test for yourself at one of HCC’s **Rapid Test Centres** [**Click Here**](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest)

**Resources -** You can find information about the vaccination programme, including resources for adults with learning disabilities and resources in different languages and formats [**Click Here**](https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/information-and-resources)

**Vaccination Programme** - There is information available about the vaccination programme, including resources for adults with learning disabilities and resources in different languages and formats [**Click Here**](https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/information-and-resources)

**[Click Here](https://www.cdaherts.org.uk/covid-information-bulletins/?doing_wp_cron=1617877994.1495609283447265625000)** for resources in different languages including leaflets and videos in Arabic and Urdu

**Questions and answers about the Vaccine are available** [**Click Here**](https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/vaccination-faqs)

**Are you registered with a GP?** [**Click Here**](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/)

**If you or your family need financial or practical help and advice with the cost of food or fuel this winter, please get in touch with HertsHelp**:

[**Click Here**](https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx) or email **info@hertshelp.net** or call **0300 123 4044**

For more information and guidance for residents and businesses during the pandemic please [**Click Here**](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-need-to-know.aspx)