**Covid-19 Information Update Issue 17 (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 be complacent. We must continue to play our part to stop the spread. Thanks to the work of GP practices, hospitals, pharmacies, our larger vaccination sites and thousands of volunteers, more than **One Million doses** have been given in Hertfordshire and West Essex so far.

**Vaccination update - Walk-in sessions for over 40s**

This week, anyone aged 40 and over can walk into a number of vaccination centres across Hertfordshire and West Essex **without** the need for an appointment – making it even easier to start to get protected against COVID-19.

For the first time in the local vaccination programme, drop-in sessions are being offered at our large vaccination centres, to make the most of available vaccine supplies. That’s why, for a limited period, people who have yet to book their vaccine can turn up at particular sites in Hertfordshire and west Essex during opening hours to receive their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

For a list of venues and opening times [**Click Here**](https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/vaccination-walk-times-40-year-olds-10-16-may-2021)

Anyone who is 40+ or currently eligible to be vaccinated for another reason should ideally bring their NHS number with them to their appointment – which you can find online [**Here**](https://www.nhs.uk/find-nhs-number/what-is-your-name) if you don’t know it.  Otherwise, any other recognised form of identification, such as a driving license, passport or utility bill, will be fine.

There are plenty of appointments available for those people who are eligible and prefer to make a booked appointment - either directly with participating GP practices or by using the [National Booking Service](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/).

**Pop-up vaccination clinics -** This Saturday (15 May) a pop-up vaccination clinic is being held at Wellspring Church, Watford between 10am – 1 pm. People who are eligible for the jab can book an appointment by calling 01923 278181. Lines are open 11am-7pm this week until Friday 14 May.

On Sunday 16 May from 12-3pm, there is a pop-up clinic at Jackson Hall in Hoddesdon. Eligible people can book now by calling **07726 249713**. Lines are open 9am - 6pm.

When booking, it’s easier if people have their NHS number to hand. They can find it [**Here**](https://www.nhs.uk/find-nhs-number/what-is-your-name)

**New advice for the under 40s -** [Advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-and-blood-clotting/covid-19-vaccination-and-blood-clotting) from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on the AstraZeneca vaccine has been updated for anyone under 40 who is eligible for the jab. The JCVI now recommends that **‘‘unvaccinated adults aged 30 to 39 years who are not in a clinical priority group at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, should be preferentially offered an alternative to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, where possible and only where no substantial delay or barrier in access to vaccination would arise”.**

People under 40 who are eligible for the jab (those in priority groups 1-9) who go online to book their first appointment will therefore be offered appointments at vaccination centres that are offering either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Anyone aged under 40 who has already had one dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and has not experienced a very significant side-effect is recommended to go ahead and have their second AstraZeneca vaccination when the time comes.

**Rapid Testing -** The distribution of rapid COVID testing kits for people without symptoms (lateral flow tests) is continuing successfully across Hertfordshire. COVID Marshals have been handing out test kits in seven locations this week and more than 36,000 test kits have been handed out so far by Hertfordshire pharmacies. 1 in 3 people who catch Covid don’t display any symptoms, which means that the virus can be spread without realising it. Rapid testing sites, designed to detect COVID-19 in people without symptoms, are offering ‘lateral flow tests’ across Hertfordshire. Now there’s no need to book – just walk in. You can also order rapid Covid testing kits to use at home or collect them from a local site or a pharmacy taking part in the lateral flow test scheme.

Twice weekly rapid testing enables us to find cases and prevent the spread of infection. Getting into the habit of twice weekly testing helps to keep our friends and family safe, and alongside the vaccination programme, will help ensure we can continue to ease our way out of lockdown.

For more information [**Click Here**](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest)

**Remember, if you have COVID symptoms, you must get a ‘PCR’ test. Find out how to get a PCR test here:** [**www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test**](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

**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 have created a [**SHARE checklist**](https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/) to help and protect you from false information online.

You can find more information about the vaccination programme, including 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)

Videos have been created by some of Hertfordshire’s Covid Information Champions in different languages about the coronavirus vaccine [**Click Here**](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgtazLRY5Zd-yrK9YZzsEukHC4SmQ4mO0)

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

Visit [**www.hertshelp.net**](http://www.hertshelp.net) email **info@hertshelp.net** or call **0300 123 4044**

For more information and guidance for residents and businesses during the pandemic please [**Click Here**](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)