



Weekly Covid Vaccine Newsletter from Swansea Bay University Health Board

Date: May 26th, 2021

Introduction:

We're delighted to say that by mid-June we aim to have offered everyone over 18 living in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot their first dose of the Covid vaccine. Letters for people aged 18+ who have not yet been invited should be landing on doormats by 7th June. If you haven't heard by then please join our reserve list (link below).

Four out of 10 people aged 18 to 29 have had their first dose already. Anyone aged under 40 will receive a Pfizer vaccine as Moderna is not available in our area.

We also aim to have offered everyone 50+ (who was vaccinated before April) a second dose within the next month. The gap between first and second doses of the vaccine remains at around 12 weeks in Wales.

If you have already received a first dose of the Oxford-AZ vaccine and did not experience serious side effects, you should continue to receive the same vaccine for your second dose as there are no clotting safety concerns with second doses. This is in accordance with JCVI guidelines which recommend the vaccination course should be completed with the same brand of vaccine.

We are not able to offer an alternative vaccine for 2nd doses.

We've made huge progress but we're not leaving anyone behind.

If you haven't yet had your FIRST vaccine for ANY reason:

- Please contact our booking centre on 01792 200492 or 01639 862323 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Saturday to make an appointment. *If you are over 40 you may be able to have your vaccine on our Immbulance mobile vaccination unit or at one of four community pharmacies in Swansea. This is because they offer the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which is no longer recommended for those under 40.*

- You can also join our reserve list online. [Go to this page on the health board website to join the reserve list.](#)

We know we haven't got up to date addresses and contact numbers for some residents, which is why you may not have received an appointment letter or been contacted by us. (If you have moved or changed your mobile number remember to tell your GP surgery because we get our information from their records.)

You can also book a first dose if you previously turned down an appointment and have now changed your mind and would like the vaccine.

It doesn't matter what the reason is, we want to make sure everyone gets the chance to have the vaccination.

We've got much more to tell you about this week, so let's get cracking.

Latest figures

Please note: Figures correct as of 2.30pm on Wednesday, May 26th. These figures are for the Swansea Bay University Health Board area, not the whole of Wales.

1st dose: **255,628**

2nd dose: **128,095**

Doses given in GP practices (first and second doses): **102,326**

Running total (1st and 2nd doses): **383,723**

Latest news

Vaccination and travel Vaccination certificates, also known as vaccine passports, for international travel (including cruises in UK waters) are now available in Wales for those who have had two doses of the vaccine by calling 0300 303 5667. (Open seven days, between 9am and 5pm. Certificates take seven to 10 working days to progress.)

This is a temporary system until people in Wales are given access to the NHS app, which those living in England already use to get hold of their Covid vaccination certificates.

Your GP and the health board are unable to provide these certificates.

Remember that in Wales the rules are slightly different to England and at the moment the Welsh Government is advising against non-essential travel.

It's also a good idea to check the requirements of the country you plan to visit as some may ask you to take a Covid test before departure. This must be a private test, not an NHS test.

Covid variant of concern (so-called Indian variant) You may have seen on the news that we have had a small number of cases of this variant in the Swansea Bay area. This is worrying news because it appears to have a higher infection rate, which means it's easier to catch and pass on to someone else.

We can tackle this in two ways:

- Even though the relaxation of the rules allows us to go to more places and see more people, we should still socially distance, wear masks in indoor public places like shops or the hairdressers and wash our hands or use hand sanitiser regularly. Meeting outdoors is a safer way to catch up with friends and family as the fresh air helps to blow the virus away. Let's hope the rain stays away!
- Make sure you get both doses of the Covid vaccination as the course offers good protection against this variant: 88% effectiveness with Pfizer and 60% for Oxford-AstraZeneca (AZ) after BOTH doses. This compares to 93% effectiveness from two doses of Pfizer against the UK or Kent variant (which remains the most widespread strain in Wales) and 66% effectiveness against the UK or Kent strain from two doses of the AZ vaccine. (Source: Public Health England research.)

Covid vaccine and pregnancy Just found out you're pregnant, already showing or almost there? The Covid vaccine is now recommended for all pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy.

But before you have your first vaccination:

- We advise you to read the latest information from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). [This information can be found on the RCOG website.](#)
- If you've been sent an appointment letter or want to reschedule a missed appointment, ring the booking team on 01792 200492 or 01639 862323 to arrange to have the Pfizer vaccine.
- Need more support and advice? Contact your local midwifery team or consultant if consultant-led.
- [Go to this page on our website for the contact details for the community midwifery teams and the answers to many frequently asked questions.](#)

Covid vaccine for the under 18s Some people aged under 18 have been asking about vaccination. At the moment, no one under 18 can be invited unless you have previously been identified at high risk due to underlying health conditions. Those aged 16 and 17 who are unpaid carers or live with an adult with a severely weakened immune system can also be vaccinated.

We are aware that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are reviewing whether younger adults and teenagers should be vaccinated routinely and we hope that there will be some further news on this in July.

Getting your Covid vaccine if you have a severe allergy A highly-specialised clinic has been opened so those at risk of rare and potentially life-threatening allergic reactions can have the Covid vaccine just like everyone else.

Staffed by clinicians with a total of 100 years NHS experience and with extra drugs and support on hand just in case, the once-a-week Morriston Hospital service has already given first and second doses to around 40 people.

Those with allergies must be referred to the clinic by a GP or other health professional.

They include mum-of-two Alison Holland, 53, from Swansea, who is a staff nurse at Singleton Hospital in the city.

Having almost lost her life to a severe allergic reaction, also known as anaphylaxis, triggered by a general anaesthetic 12 years ago, she was very nervous but knew the benefits of having the Covid vaccine still far outweighed the risks.

Alison was given her first dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine by Immunisation Co-ordinator Catherine Courts and had no ill effects.

All health board staff involved in patient care must wear PPE (personal protective equipment) in accordance with current guidance and adhere to strict handwashing to protect patients, regardless of vaccination status.

However most frontline staff will have received their first dose of the vaccine in December or January unlike Alison, who had to wait until now so she could have enhanced monitoring as a precaution.

[Go to this page on our website to read the full story about our special clinic.](#)

Are you getting your information from a reliable source? Myths about the Covid vaccines are often shared on social media and by word and mouth.

You may have heard false stories about the vaccine affecting fertility or the ingredients it contains. You may have been told that you don't need a vaccine if you have a healthy immune system or that the technology in the vaccines enters your DNA.

All of these stories and theories are false.

- There is no evidence that vaccines affect fertility and no foetal matter is used in the manufacturing process.
- Vaccines are a safe way of teaching your immune system to recognise and mount an attack against a potential threat without the pressure of having the actual illness. If you have the vaccine and come into contact with the actual virus later on, you will already have the antibodies needed to fight it off.
- Some vaccines, like the one made by Pfizer, use a technology called mRNA or messenger molecules. These teach your body to make the protein spikes found on the outside of the Covid virus molecules, not the whole virus, so that the body can learn to recognise these spikes and make antibodies to mount an attack against them. The messenger instructions cannot be combined with your DNA and are destroyed by the body soon after they are used.
- The vaccines CANNOT give you Covid.

[Actor Michael Sheen, star of lockdown comedy Staged, explains in simple terms how vaccines work in an animation produced by our Medical Illustration department.](#)

[The Welsh Government has also produced a detailed coronavirus and vaccine fact checker.](#)

[And Public Health Wales has an excellent vaccination information section on its website, which includes detailed FAQs, videos from health professionals and information in accessible formats such as British Sign Language, easy-read and different languages.](#)

[Clotting concerns – There is also a special page on the Public Health Wales website which looks at the extremely rare complication of blood clotting and unusual bleeding in relation to the AZ vaccine.](#)

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But you don't have to take our word for it. As part of the new BBC One Wales series Hayley Goes... TV presenter Hayley Pearce, pictured below, finds out more about Covid, talking to medical professionals to help her sort out fact from fiction as she makes her own decision on whether to have the vaccine or not.

Parts of the programme were filmed at Morriston Hospital in Swansea, and the Bay Mass Vaccination Centre.



(Image shows TV presenter Hayley Pearce putting on a surgical face mask.)

Hayley Goes...Vaccine Frontline will be shown on BBC One Wales on Tuesday, June 1st at 10.45pm.

And finally...Swansea Bay NHS is now on Instagram! Find us @SwanseaBayUHB

That's all for this week. Many thanks for reading.