

Fact check - common COVID-19 vaccine myths

Below are common myths about the coronavirus vaccine which have been fact checked. Fact checking statements and sources for these statements are provided.

The majority of the fact checking has been done by Full Fact, an independent fact checking website which can be found at <https://fullfact.org>. In some cases, the Library and Knowledge Services has provided alternative evidence to support the fact check.

Myth	The vaccine works differently on people from ethnic minority background.
Fact check	There is no evidence to suggest the vaccine will work differently on people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
Fact check source	Vaccine information - COVID-19 Staff FAQs - Oxford University Hospitals (ouh.nhs.uk) – short answer COVID-19 vaccine in Leeds (leedsth.nhs.uk) – slightly more detailed answer Public Assessment Report (publishing.service.gov.uk) – Pfizer Public Assessment Report (publishing.service.gov.uk) - AstraZeneca

Myth	The vaccine is not halal, it contains pork.
Fact check	The Pfizer and Oxford vaccines do not contain animal products.
Fact check source	There isn't pork in Covid-19 vaccines - Full Fact

Myth	I can't get the vaccine because I'm allergic to eggs
Fact check	The approved COVID-19 vaccines do not contain eggs
Fact check source	Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk) – scroll down to COVID-19 vaccine ingredients

Myth	People who are allergic to penicillin can't have the Pfizer vaccine
Fact check	Current UK medical advice is that people allergic to penicillin can have any approved COVID-19 vaccine
Fact check source	Penicillin allergies don't rule out Pfizer vaccine - Full Fact

Myth	The vaccine contains aborted male foetal cells.
Fact check	COVID-19 vaccines do not contain cells from aborted fetuses. The Pfizer mRNA vaccine is synthetic and does not use foetal cell lines in its production. "The AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine makes use of cell lines replicated from an aborted fetus in 1973, but does not itself contain fetal cells" (FactCheckNI, 2020)
Fact check source	COVID-19 vaccines and aborted fetuses – FactCheckNI There are no foetal cells in the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine - Full Fact

Myth	In order to be released quicker, the vaccine has not gone through the same processes as other vaccines.
Fact check	The vaccine has gone through the same strict processes and regulations as other vaccines. It has been possible to make it so quickly because it was a global effort and huge funds were made available to help this.
Fact check source	Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk) The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine: What is it and how has it been developed so quickly? – FactCheckNI

Myth	A tracking microchip will be injected when you get the vaccine.
Fact check	RFID microchips will not be injected with the COVID-19 vaccine.
Fact check source	Fact check: RFID microchips will not be injected with the COVID-19 vaccine, altered video features Bill and Melinda Gates and Jack Ma Reuters

Myth	The vaccine will alter your DNA.
Fact check	The vaccine doesn't change or damage our DNA.
Fact check source	RNA Covid-19 vaccines will not change your DNA - Full Fact mRNA vaccines are being developed for Covid-19, but they do not change your DNA - Full Fact

Myth	The vaccine affects male and female fertility.
Fact check	There is no evidence to suggest the vaccine affects fertility.
Fact check source	No evidence that nanoparticles in Covid-19 vaccines affect fertility - Full Fact There isn't pork in Covid-19 vaccines - Full Fact – see claim 2 No evidence Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine affects women's fertility - Full Fact

Myth	Pfizer have protection from legal action by UK government
Fact check	“Current UK law says that if the government decided to authorise a vaccine for emergency use, manufacturers and healthcare professionals would not take responsibility for most civil liability claims. However if the product is not found to have met safety standards or is defective, this immunity is lost” (Full Fact, 2020)
Fact check source	A post about coronavirus vaccines gets facts about their safety, ingredients, and legality wrong - Full Fact – see claim 4

Myth	The vaccine contains the live virus so I will get coronavirus if I get the vaccine.
Fact check	The Pfizer/BioNTech and the Oxford vaccines do not contain whole or live forms of the virus so the vaccine does not cause you to get coronavirus. The vaccines work by sending instructions to the body to create the spike protein of the coronavirus, causing our immune system to recognise it and destroy it.
Fact check source	COVID-19 vaccines Vaccine Knowledge (ox.ac.uk) – see Pfizer-BioNTech BNT162b2 vaccine, Oxford-AstraZeneca ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (AZD1222), Nucleic acid and viral vectored vaccines explained Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines CDC – NB. This is an American source – the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are currently authorized in America but not the Oxford vaccine

Concerns about side effects

The NHS website provides advice on common side effects of the vaccines and on allergic reactions. Go to the NHS Coronavirus vaccine pages and scroll down to COVID-19 vaccines side effects. The information on the page is currently being reviewed on a regular basis therefore it is not being copied into this document in case anything changes. You can find the page here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus/vaccine/). Please familiarise yourself with the information and keep checking back.

What to do if you think you have found a coronavirus myth

Use a fact checking site

Check if it has already been fact checked by one of the following fact checking sites:

Full Fact - <https://fullfact.org/>

Health Feedback - <https://healthfeedback.org>

Snopes - <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/>

Use a mythbusting checklist

Have a go at mythbusting the information yourself using one of the following checklists.

CRAAP Test – Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
<https://infolit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ResearchSmarter/Docs/CRAAP.pdf>

How to spot fake news – International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
<https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174>

SHARE checklist
<https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/>

www. Video
<https://buzzmanchester.co.uk/learn-about-health/check-online-information-using-the-www-method>

Checking websites picture guide
<https://d1jw0l0b625fbx.cloudfront.net/Check-Website-Picture-Guide.pdf?mtime=20200710090006&focal=none>

Reliable sources of information

The Library and Knowledge Service has collated a variety of reliable sources of information on coronavirus on the buzz COVID-19 Resource Hub. This information is aimed at the public: <https://buzzmanchester.co.uk/learnabouthealth/covid19> .

The Library and Knowledge Service has also collated the latest evidence and information on various coronavirus topics on the Library COVID-19 Resources page on the GMMH website. This information is aimed at Trust staff: <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/library-covid-19-resources>

Misinformation training

The Library and Knowledge Service delivers online training on how to spot misinformation in the news and social media. This training is designed for health, social care, community and voluntary sector professionals and is free to attend. Find out more and how to book your place on the Introduction to Misinformation training here: <https://buzzmanchester.co.uk/in-your-area/the-better-information-programme-introduction-to-misinformation>

If you have any questions about the above information, please email library@gmmh.nhs.uk