

8th April 2021 - AstraZeneca COVID Vaccine Update

An update from the Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance in relation to the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine has been issued. The updated guidance has been published and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-jcvi-statement/jcvi-statement-on-use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-7-april-2021>

JCVI has weighed the relative balance of benefits and risks and advise that the benefits of prompt vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine far outweigh the risk of adverse events for individuals 30 years of age and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease. JCVI currently advises that it is preferable for adults aged <30 years without underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, to be offered an alternative COVID-19 vaccine, if available. People may make an informed choice to receive the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to receive earlier protection.

Second doses for all individuals who have already had the Astra Zeneca vaccine as a first dose:

JCVI state ‘all those who have received a first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should continue to be offered a second dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, irrespective of age.’

Therefore, for recipients in cohorts 1-9 who have received a first dose of AstraZeneca and are due to receive their second dose, no further action is required and these appointments should continue.

MHRA are clear that the only individuals who should not have a second dose of AstraZeneca are those set out below:

Administration of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca in patients with a history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, acquired or hereditary thrombophilia, heparin-induced thrombocytopenia or antiphospholipid syndrome should only be considered when the potential benefit outweighs any potential risks.

Patients who have experienced major venous and arterial thrombosis occurring with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with any COVID-19 vaccine should not receive a second dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca.

First doses for individuals 30 years of age and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease:

JCVI has weighed the relative balance of benefits and risks and advise that the benefits of prompt vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine far outweigh the risk of adverse events for individuals 30 years of age and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease.

Therefore, for recipients in cohorts 1-9 aged 30 years and above who are scheduled to receive a first dose of AstraZeneca, vaccination should continue with patient consent

First doses for individuals aged under 30 years of age with no underlying health conditions:

JCVI guidance states 'There are some adults <30 without underlying health conditions who are in phase 1, who were prioritised due to an increased risk of exposure and/or to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to vulnerable individuals. This includes health and social care workers, unpaid carers and household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals. Acting on a precautionary basis, if these persons are still unvaccinated, it is preferable for them to be offered an alternative COVID-19 vaccine, if available.'

Patients aged under 30yrs who have an appointment for their first dose should still attend their appointment and the clinical team at the Arena will be able to manage any questions regarding the vaccine when they attend.