



## Guidance for individuals who have been vaccinated or had previous infection with COVID-19 when visiting a household setting

Version 1.4 09/09/2021

Version	Date	Changes from previous version	Author
1.4	09/09/2021	Change to wording for not detected COVID-19 result and 48h symptom free	COVID-19 Guidance team (HPSC)
1.3	19/07/2021	Title of guidance changed to "Guidance for individuals who have been vaccinated or had previous infection with COVID-19 when visiting a household setting"	COVID-19 Guidance team (HPSC)
1.2	07/07/2021	Update sufficient vaccine protection 15 days after second AstraZeneca dose Updated information to reflect there is no limit on the number of people that can visit together once they are all fully vaccinated or have had COVID-19 in the previous nine months.	COVID-19 Guidance team (HPSC)
1.1	17/05/2021	Change to allow a person who has received one dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to visit another household 28 days after receipt of the first dose Addition of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine New recommendation that vaccinated individuals can meet indoors with unvaccinated individuals, certain caveats apply Reference to new recently published guidance from ECDC and NIAC	COVID-19 Guidance team (HPSC)
1.0	31/03/2021	Published version 1	COVID-19 Guidance team (HPSC)

This guidance is subject to change over time as new evidence becomes available.

## Purpose

NPHE requested that HPSC review and update the guidance for individuals who have been vaccinated or had confirmed previous infection with Covid-19 when visiting a household setting in light of relevant emerging evidence.

## Background and recommendations

This guidance is for individuals who have been vaccinated or had confirmed previous infection with Covid-19 during the previous nine months and who are visiting a household setting. This guidance does not apply to vaccinated/previously infected individuals visiting a healthcare setting, workplace or residential care facility.

Vaccinated individuals are those who have received a vaccine that has been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and are:

- 7 days after receipt of the **second** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty®) COVID-19 vaccine
- 14 days after receipt of the **second** Moderna (Moderna®) COVID-19 vaccine
- 14 days after receipt of the Janssen (Janssen®) COVID-19 vaccine (**one dose vaccination course**)
- 15 days after receipt of the **second** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria® or Covishield) COVID-19 vaccine

This guidance may change over time. Although the doses recommended above for each specific vaccine provide significant vaccine protection it remains essential that all individuals receive the recommended full course of vaccination, as per the [vaccination schedule](#).

This guidance has been informed by:

- [ECDC Technical Report](#) "Interim guidance on the benefits of full vaccination against COVID-19 for transmission and implications for non-pharmaceutical interventions"
- [ECDC Technical Report](#) "Risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from newly infected individuals with documented previous infection or vaccination"
- [CDC Science Brief](#) "Background Rationale and Evidence for Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People" and [CDC](#) "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People"
- National Immunisation Advisory Committee. [NIAC recommendations for the Use of COVID-19 Vaccines: 1. COVID-19 Vaccine Janssen; 2. Vaxzevria COVID-19 vaccine AstrZeneca; 3. mRNA Vaccine Dose Interval](#). Published 26.04.2021.

## Summary of evidence

There is evidence that vaccines are highly effective in protecting individuals against symptomatic infection and severe disease. At this time, however, there is a lack of robust evidence on transmission of COVID-19 from vaccinated individuals to unvaccinated individuals. The [ECDC Report](#) provides a summary of the available scientific evidence on the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission to susceptible contacts from infected individuals with documented previous infection or vaccination. It is intended to support countries in producing their own guidance. ECDC notes however that the evidence was generated before variants of concern started circulating widely and therefore conclusions may be revised as more data becomes available in the future. [The CDC scientific brief](#) details a growing body of evidence which suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection and potentially less likely to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others. CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people can visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing. For further summary information on these reports, see Appendix A.

A HIQA review recently published 'Duration of protected immunity (protection from reinfection) following SARS-CoV-2 infection', published June 3rd 2021, found that people who were tested and confirmed COVID-19 in the past are likely to be protected against reinfection for up to nine months [3].

**The evidence suggests that the risks are likely to be low for persons visiting each other in a household setting if persons are fully protected either by vaccination or have had COVID-19 infection confirmed in the previous nine months**

## Recommendations

### Persons who are:

- a. 7 days after receipt of the **second** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty®) dose (two dose vaccination course)
- b. 14 days after receipt of the **second** Moderna (Moderna®) dose (two dose vaccination course)
- c. 14 days after receipt of the Janssen (Janssen®) dose (**one dose vaccination course**)
- d. 15 days after receipt of the **second** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria® or Covishield) dose (two dose vaccination course)

### OR

Have had confirmed COVID-19 infection in the previous nine months

### AND

### who are asymptomatic<sup>1</sup>

1. can visit other asymptomatic people who are also fully protected either by vaccination (i.e., they meet the above vaccination criteria) or have had COVID-19 infection in the previous nine months in a household setting, without wearing face coverings or practicing physical distancing,
2. can meet indoors with unvaccinated asymptomatic people from a single household, without wearing face coverings or practicing physical distancing, provided there are no persons who are at [high risk](#) or [very high risk](#) of severe illness

These recommendations do not apply if any of the vaccinated asymptomatic people have travelled internationally within the previous 14 days, or if they have had contact with a person under investigation for a variant of concern (VOC) or a person who has been confirmed to be infected with a VOC. In these circumstances, visiting is not permitted.

- If a vaccinated person has **any symptoms** of COVID-19 they must not visit others, including vaccinated people. They must self-isolate and seek medical assessment and testing for COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup> Asymptomatic = no symptoms consistent with COVID-19. See [here](#) for list of symptoms.

- Vaccinated people should continue to take precautions in **all** other settings, such as hand hygiene, physical distancing and wearing a well-fitted mask where indicated.

## Appendix A

### ECDC Report

#### Transmission

The available evidence of COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness against transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is still limited. As per the ECDC Technical Report, only one study was identified that directly investigated and reported on the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccine against transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to susceptible contacts from vaccinated cases [1]. Findings from this study were “consistent with a substantial reduction in transmission risk from fully-vaccinated individuals to susceptible contacts”.

Ongoing and upcoming studies should add further evidence regarding transmission between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in the coming months. There are ongoing healthcare workers’ household studies in the UK. Household studies are also planned in Israel, involving close family contacts of vaccinated individuals.

#### Infection in vaccinated individuals

COVID-19 vaccines do not confer sterilising immunity to all individuals. Hence, vaccinated individuals might still be able to transmit SARS-CoV-2 infection to susceptible contacts.

There is evidence that vaccination significantly reduces infection in vaccinated individuals. A limited number of vaccine studies with prospective follow-up show reduced viral load and duration of virus shedding among vaccine recipients compared to placebo groups. Viral load is thought to be a leading indicator of SARS-CoV-2 transmission [2]. It is not currently known if these observed reductions in viral load and duration of shedding actually reduce transmission.

However, the ECDC report acknowledges the **limitations** below:

- The review was based on emerging evidence, much of it from the pre-print, non-peer reviewed literature.
- Vaccines have only been developed and tested very recently. Hence, there is limited data available regarding transmission.
- The situation concerning VOCs is evolving rapidly. Much of the evidence collected and presented here was generated before the variants started circulating widely and therefore conclusions may be revised as more data becomes available in the future.

## **CDC Science Brief**

The CDC has produced [guidance](#) for fully vaccinated people based on their Science Brief. This guidance makes three recommendations for fully vaccinated people in non-healthcare settings.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors, without wearing masks or physical distancing
- refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic.

The CDC notes that “the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated in the setting of continued widespread community transmission of the virus. Vaccinated people could potentially still become infected and spread the virus to others. However, the benefits of avoiding disruptions such as unnecessary quarantine and social isolation may outweigh these potential residual risks. A balanced approach to phasing out certain prevention measures may be a powerful motivator for vaccination, and thus should be an important goal of the U.S. vaccination program.”

### **References:**

1: Shah AS, Gribben C, Bishop J, Hanlon P, Caldwell D, Wood R, et al. Effect of vaccination on transmission of COVID-19: an observational study in healthcare workers and their households. medRxiv [Preprint]. 2021. DOI: 10.1101/2021.03.11.21253275. Available at: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.03.11.21253275v1>

2: Marks M, Millat-Martinez P, Ouchi D, Roberts Ch, Alemany A, Corbacho-Monné M, et al. Transmission of COVID-19 in 282 clusters in Catalonia, Spain: a cohort study. The Lancet Infectious Diseases [Preprint]. 2021. DOI: 10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30985-3. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1473309920309853>

3: Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). Duration of immunity (protection from reinfection) following SARS-CoV-2 infection. Dublin: HIQA; 2021. Available at: <https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2021-06/Duration-of%20protective-immunity-evidence-summary.pdf>