



COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION SHEET

What is COVID-19 disease?

COVID-19 is a viral disease that mainly affects respiratory system but may also affect the other organs such as the heart, kidney, blood vessels etc. People above 60 years of age and those with underlying conditions such as heart, lung, liver, kidney diseases, those with immunocompromised state, diabetes, pregnancies etc. may have more severe presentation and outcome.

SARS-Cov-2 is primarily transmitted by person to person and can be highly infectious and can be transmitted through respiratory route and contact. A person may develop symptoms within 1 to 14 days after exposure. Person can transmit the virus 2 days before the symptom onset and during the time they have symptoms. About 40% of people may not develop any symptoms though they are able to transmit the infection. Common symptoms include sore throat, runny nose, cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache, body ache, loss of smell/taste, diarrhoea, and vomiting.

If a person develops COVID-19 like symptoms, they should self-isolate and visit a flu clinic and get tested. COVID-19 PCR test can detect the infection.

To minimize the chance of catching the virus, it is advisable to follow all preventive measures such as wearing masks, physical distancing (at least 3 feet distance), frequent hand washing, cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and good ventilation.

What are the benefits of vaccination?

Vaccination protects the person taking the vaccine and the community. When more people are vaccinated it prevents community transmission and protects those who cannot take the vaccine like pregnant women, children etc. Two doses of vaccine are required to attain protection.

The vaccine prevents severe COVID-19 disease and will decrease the severity and spread of Covid-19 disease. However, there may be a chance that you might still get or spread infection. Therefore, it is important to wear mask and follow the social distancing guidance and other preventive measures.

How long will I be monitored after vaccination?

After the vaccination you will be observed for 15 minutes, but in case if you have any history of significant allergies you will be observed for 30 minutes.

When would it be considered completion of Covid-19 vaccination?

Two doses are required separated by the recommended interval and the two doses should be of the same type of vaccine

Which COVID-19 Vaccines are available in the Maldives?

COVISHIELD: This vaccine is developed by Serum Institute of India (SII), with technology transferred from AstraZeneca/Oxford University, UK.

How is the COVISHIELD vaccine given?

The vaccine is administered in the upper arm muscle. Two doses are required separated by an interval of 8-12 weeks. After the vaccination you will be observed for 15 to 30 minutes. If the second dose is missed, consult National Immunization Program and it should be given preferably within 6 months.

If you feel unwell it is advisable not to drive or operate heavy machineries and inform health authorities.

How can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Register and update your information accordingly in my.health.mv portal and once verified you will be contacted when your appointment is confirmed.
- Prior to vaccination onsite informed consent will be taken.
- All eligible individuals will receive COVID-19 vaccination free of cost.

What should you do before you arrive at the vaccination site?

1. Have a proper meal and do not go empty stomach
2. Carry your own water bottle
3. Ensure you have a valid ID card or passport and bring it to the vaccination center
4. Wear loose clothing so upper arm can be exposed easily
5. Read the information sheet
6. Read and be aware of the consent form

Can I take the COVISHIELD vaccine if I am on take blood thinners?

Yes, you can have the vaccine but you should let the vaccination team know that you are taking a blood thinner.

Blood thinners are medicines such as Warfarin, dabigatran, apixaban, enoxaparin etc., which are used in the treatment of some types of heart diseases, mechanical heart valves, venous thrombosis etc. Persons with any of the above medical conditions, for which blood thinners are prescribed, are at a high risk of severe disease, if they are infected with the COVID-19 virus. They are among the people who will most need the protection of the vaccine.

The COVISHIELD vaccine is injected into the muscle of your upper arm. As with any other injection, there is some risk of bleeding at the injection site when you are taking a blood thinner as the blood may take a little longer to stop and you may get bruising on your upper arm.

The vaccine will be given if your blood thinner treatment is stable which generally means that you have been taking the **same dose for a while** and that, if you are on warfarin, **your INR checks are up to date and that your latest INR level is in the right range**. If you have any doubts, you can also consult with the clinician responsible for prescribing or monitoring your treatment or bring a written document for vaccination.

You should bring your latest records when you come for your vaccination appointment and a doctor from the Vaccination team will be consulted regarding your blood thinner status prior to vaccination.

Who should not receive COVID-19 Vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given to any person:

- Who is under the age of 18 years
- Who has a history of a significant allergic reaction to any dose of the vaccine
- Who has a history of an allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine (*L- Histidine, L-Histidine hydrochloride monohydrate, Magnesium chloride hexahydrate, Polysorbate 80, Ethanol, Sucrose, Sodium chloride, Disodium edetate dihydrate (EDTA), Water for injection*)
- Who is pregnant
- Who is acutely unwell with or without fever till symptoms are resolved

Will the vaccine give me covid-19 infection?

No. Vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2 virus and cannot give you COVID-19 infection.

Can I take Covid-19 vaccine is if I am pregnant or during lactation?

If you are pregnant you cannot take Covid-19 vaccine.

Currently, there is limited data available on covid-19 vaccine during lactation, however, during lactation it can be given after counselling and many countries are giving Covid-19 vaccine during lactation.

Can I take Covid-19 vaccine is I have had a Covid-19 infection?

Yes. if you are better and at least 28 days have passed from onset of disease.

Can I take another vaccine with covid-19 vaccine?

No. you cannot give any other vaccine together with covid-19 vaccine and there should be a gap of 14 days with covid-19 vaccines n any other vaccine. However, in case of any necessary vaccines such as tetanus, etc the attending doctor should decide and inform.

What are the possible side-effects of COVID-19 vaccine?

Side effects that have been reported with the COVID-19 Vaccine include:

Very common

- Tenderness, pain, warmth, redness, itching, swelling, bruising where the injection is given
- Generally feeling unwell
- Feeling tired (fatigue)
- Chill or feeling feverish

- Headache
- Feeling sick (nausea)
- Joint pain or muscle ache

Common

- A lump at the injection site
- Fever
- Being sick (vomiting)
- Flu like symptoms, such as high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, cough and chills

Uncommon

- Feeling dizzy
- Decreased appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Enlarged lymph nodes
- Excessive sweating, itchy skin or rash

Note: These may not be all the possible side-effects of COVID-19 vaccine. Like other medications unexpected side-effects may occur.

****If you have any breathing difficulty, skin rash or severe symptoms seek immediate medical care from the nearest hospital*

What should I do about side effects?

If you experience any breathing difficulty, skin rash or severe symptoms, seek immediate medical care from the nearest hospital or health center. Minor symptoms such as low-grade fever, local reactions usually resolve within 2 to 3 days. If these symptoms persist or become more severe seek medical care from a health care provider.

For fever tablet paracetamol (500mg) can be taken every 6 to 8 hourly if fever persist. It is not recommended to massage or apply any local medication on the injection site. If there is bleeding from the vaccination site continue applying pressure with the swab and seek medical care if there is persistent bleeding.

Note: If you have any queries regarding Covid-19 vaccine, please email to vaccine@health.gov.mv
