

# Your Health

Update for patients and the public in Berkshire West  
(Includes West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading)



October 2021

The biggest flu vaccination programme in history has been launched alongside a Covid booster campaign amid concerns people are underestimating the combined threat of the two viruses this winter.

People are being urged to book their appointments as soon as possible to help give themselves and their loved ones the best possible protection as both viruses have the potential to cause serious illness and hospitalisation.

There could be a significant flu surge this winter coinciding with continuing or rising COVID-19 cases. This is due to colder weather which favours transmission, darker nights which mean increased social contact indoors where it is less well ventilated, and expected lower immunity to flu due to lower levels in circulation last winter.

Around 131,300 lives have been saved by the COVID-19 vaccine so far - and up to 24.3 million infections prevented. To check your eligibility for the flu vaccine and COVID-19 booster vaccine or to find a service visit [nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)

An NHS advertisement featuring a photograph of an elderly man in a dark cap and jacket holding a young child in a grey winter coat. The child is looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. The NHS logo is in the top right corner. The text at the bottom reads: "Vaccines are our best protection this winter. It's easy for us to pass on COVID-19 or flu viruses without knowing. This winter there are two essential vaccines you'll need to protect yourself and your loved ones. Find out if you're eligible now at [nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)"

**Vaccines are our best protection this winter.**

It's easy for us to pass on COVID-19 or flu viruses without knowing. This winter there are two essential vaccines you'll need to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Find out if you're eligible now at [nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)

### How do I get my FREE flu jab?

Eligible people can book an appointment for their free flu jab at either their GP practice or their local pharmacy. Those who are pregnant can ask for their free flu jab at their local maternity service. There's a video here giving more details: <https://youtu.be/QQitHbIXyN8>

If you fit the below criteria, you are eligible for a FREE flu jab, please contact your GP surgery or local pharmacy to book your appointment.

Aged 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

- Have a long term health condition
- Pregnant
- Are in long-stay residential care
- Receive a carer's allowance or are the main carer for an older or disabled person
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

### How do I get my Covid-19 booster jab?

If you're eligible you can get a Covid-19 booster jab so long as it has been 6 months since your second dose of the vaccine. The NHS will let you know when it is your turn to have a booster dose. Currently, the booster dose is being offered to the following groups:

- People aged 50 and over
- People who live and work in care homes
- Frontline health and social care workers
- People aged 16 and over with a health condition that puts them at high risk of getting seriously ill from Covid-19
- Carers aged 16 and over
- People aged 16 and over who live with someone who is more likely to get infections i.e. someone who has HIV

If you're eligible, you can also book your Covid-19 booster vaccine online here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/book-or-manage-a-booster-dose-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine/>

### **Immunosuppressed patients 3rd Covid vaccination**

If you fall into this category of patients you will be offered a third Covid vaccination instead of a Covid booster jab. Your GP surgery will contact you when it is time to have the third vaccination. Please be patient and wait to hear from your surgery. And please try and refrain from ringing them as staff are already handling a huge number of calls.

Our local GPs and hospital consultants are currently discussing the best ways of identifying immunosuppressed patients who will be assessed on an individual basis and a clinical recommendation will then be made as to the best way of administering the third jab. The

patients will be notified by their GP about where they should go for their third jab. It could be the surgery or an appropriate site that's authorised to vaccinate and record this group of patients.

Please note, if you are an immunosuppressed patient and have already had a booster job you will not need a third dose.

## Covid and pregnant women

# Covid-19 Vaccination in Pregnancy

Making your Choice



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Risks of Covid in Pregnancy for Babies

Amongst women admitted to hospital (Total - 3371 - UKOSS 2021)

Twice the risk of stillbirth  
(1 in 100 babies died)

1 in 5 need care in Special Care Unit

1 in 3 are born prematurely



## Risks of Covid for Pregnant Women

Amongst women admitted to hospital (Total - 3371 - UKOSS 2021)

Nearly 1 in 2 have caesarean birth

1 in 4 have pneumonia

1 in 5 need help with breathing

1 in 10 need intensive care

15 maternal deaths in UK



## Could I be at even greater risk of severe Covid than other pregnant women?

Age over 35?	2.1x	↑ Increase in risk of ICU admission
BMI over 30?	2.7x	
Non-white ethnicity?	70%	
Other health condition?	66%	



"When is the riskiest time in my pregnancy?"

83% of pregnant women admitted to ICU are in the THIRD trimester of pregnancy

## How effective is the vaccine in pregnancy?

99% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with Covid are unvaccinated. 1% have had 1 dose.

2x doses are **100% effective** at preventing admission for Covid in pregnancy



## Is Covid Vaccination in pregnancy safe for my baby's development? - YES!

- All non-live vaccines are safe in pregnancy, and have been given for many years - such as Flu and Whooping Cough ✓
- COVID-19 vaccines cannot replicate and cannot infect Mum or baby with COVID-19 ✓
- COVID-19 vaccines **do not cross the placenta** ✓
- COVID-19 vaccines are not found in breast milk ✓
- Maternal antibodies to COVID do cross the placenta ✓
- Maternal antibodies to COVID are found in breast milk ✓

## Birth at RBH During Covid Vaccinating you & your family

- Minimises the chance of your birth partner needing to isolate during your birth
- Reduces your chance of suffering Long Covid during your baby's first weeks
- Reduces need to self-isolate from friends & family after your baby is born, if you come in contact with a Covid-positive person around birth

Source UKOSS SARS-CoV-2 in pregnancy study (UK 2021)

Doctors at the Royal Berkshire Hospital are urging pregnant women to get a COVID vaccine as new data shows that nationally, nearly 20 per cent of the most critically ill Covid patients are pregnant women who have not been vaccinated.

Since July, one in five COVID patients receiving treatment through a special lung-bypass machine were expectant mums who have not had their first jab. These machines are only used only when a patient's lungs are so damaged by Covid that a ventilator cannot maintain oxygen levels. Out of all women between the ages of 16 and 49 on ECMO in intensive care, pregnant women make up almost a third (32 percent) – up from just 6 per cent at the start of the pandemic, March 2020.

Dr Sarah Philip, Consultant Obstetrician at the RBH has reassured women that the vaccine is safe and effective during pregnancy and can keep them, their baby and loved ones safe and out of hospital.

The Covid vaccination in pregnancy is considered safe and is recommended by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Royal College of Midwives. Data from over 100,000 COVID vaccinations in pregnancy in England and Scotland, and a further 160,000 in the US, show there has been no subsequent harm to the foetus or infant.



**Berkshire West**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

## Why are GP Practices still working differently?

### If the Pandemic is over why aren't GP practices open?

**The pandemic is not over.** GP practices worked hard to provide a service throughout lockdown and continue to do so. To protect everyone, we must maintain safe infection control and minimise unnecessary physical contact.

#### How are practices working now?

Most appointments are being triaged. This helps keep you safe and makes sure the people with the greatest need are contacted first. We will see everyone in person who needs to be seen that way.

#### Where else can I get help?

Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for advice on common symptoms and a list of local services or speak to your community pharmacist first for advice on minor illnesses.  
Find your nearest:  
[nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy/](http://nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy/)

#### Why do receptionists ask personal questions?

GP reception staff are a vital part of the health care team and ask questions to direct you to the best support. They are supported by the highly trained clinical teams and are skilled in assisting with triage. They also work to strict codes of patient confidentiality.

#### I wanted to see my GP, so why am I seeing someone else?

Many GP practices now include a range of professionals (e.g. physician associates, pharmacists, paramedics, advanced nurse practitioners) who can diagnose and treat health conditions. This ensures that you see the right person at the right time more quickly.

#### What is triage?

You will be assessed to decide who needs:

- to be seen in person
- a phone consultation
- a video consultation
- help from a community pharmacy.

#### What about emergencies?

Always dial 999 in a life-threatening emergency. If you need help with minor injuries at any time or urgent care when your GP practice or community pharmacy is closed visit [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk) or dial 111 if you do not have internet access.

### Please be patient

Our health services are under enormous pressure- local GP's are seeing 30% rise in demand-but we are open and here if needed. Our GP's still run an out of hours service for emergencies. You can help us and help yourself by making sure you get the right care, in the right place, at the right time appropriate for your needs. Staff should be treated with respect and consideration at all times, so please continue to be kind to our staff, socially distance where possible and wear a face mask in healthcare settings.

Together  
we can  
choose  
well



## Self-isolation guidelines

### WHEN DO I NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE?



#### IF I HAVE SYMPTOMS?

You should **self-isolate** and **take a PCR test** even if you've been vaccinated and even if you are under 18 years old.



#### IF I'VE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

You need to **self-isolate** for 10 days from receipt of your test result even if you have been vaccinated and even if you are under 18 years old.

### SHOULD I SELF-ISOLATE IF...



**Q** I'm double vaccinated and I've been in contact with someone who's tested positive?

**A** **NO:** You do not need to self-isolate, **BUT** you are advised to **take a PCR test**. You only need to self-isolate if your result is positive.



**Q** I'm under 18 and I've been in contact with someone who's tested positive?

**A** **NO:** You do not need to self isolate, **BUT** you are advised to **take a PCR test**. You only need to self-isolate if your result is positive.



**Q** I've been in contact with someone who's tested positive and I'm over 18 and I've had either one or no jabs?

**A** **YES:** You need to **self-isolate** and **take a PCR test** as soon as possible. You must continue to **self-isolate** even if your result is negative.



**Q** I'm a Healthcare Worker and I've been in contact with someone who's tested positive?

**A** **NO: BUT** you must **take a PCR test** immediately. If the PCR result is positive, you must self-isolate. If it is negative you must undertake daily lateral flow testing.

Be prepared if you need to self-isolate. Ask family, friends or neighbours to do your food shop, collect your medication and help with the school run if needed. Ask your employer if you can work from home and make sure you can manage your bank account and payments online.

## Royal Berkshire Hospital Redevelopment: Community Events

Royal Berkshire Hospital is holding a series of community engagement events for local people to update them on the progress of the redevelopment and ensure that the redevelopment plan meets the needs of staff, patients, visitors and local communities. These community engagement events will share the latest updates on the redevelopment plans, and welcome suggestions and ideas from the very diverse community around us. All are welcome.

Alison Foster, the Programme Director of Building Berkshire Together Hospital Redevelopment, will also be talking about the Trust's sustainability work and what we're doing to achieve Net Zero. The next two events will be online via a webinar. The dates are as follows:

- Wednesday 10 November (15.00-16.30 hrs)
- Wednesday 17 November (18.00-19.30 hrs)

More face-to-face engagement events will be organised, so if you can't make it to these two and want to get involved, please register your interest or share your thoughts by emailing [buildingberkshiretogether@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:buildingberkshiretogether@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Also, if you would like us to come to an event or meeting you are holding to listen to your views, then let us know and we will try to accommodate this.

### **Cash boost for diagnostic testing services**

Patients in Berkshire West will benefit from enhanced health testing services thanks to a £3m Government cash injection for facilities, equipment and staff to support an expansion of diagnostic services at West Berkshire Community Hospital (WBCH).

Forty diagnostic community centres are coming on stream across the country over the next few months. In the case of the WBCH, which already offers a range of diagnostic services, chemotherapy and renal dialysis, the funding will enable the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust team to expand the service, add to the equipment on site and create new jobs.

Diagnostic community centres provide a one-stop-shop service offering checks, scans and tests. The aims are to provide:

- earlier diagnoses for patients through easier, faster, and more direct access to the full range of diagnostic tests needed to understand patients' symptoms including breathlessness, cancer, and ophthalmology
- a reduction in hospital visits which will help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission
- a reduction in waits by diverting patients away from hospitals, allowing them to treat urgent patients, while the community diagnostic centres focus on tackling the backlog
- a contribution to the NHS's net zero ambitions by providing multiple tests at one visit, reducing the number of patient journeys and helping to cut carbon emissions and air pollution

Andrew Statham, Director of Strategy Transformation and Partnerships for Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust said: "The Government funding will allow us to bring forward the replacement of some of our diagnostic equipment enhancing what we can deliver out at West Berkshire Community Hospital. It means we can progress our work on tackling waiting lists and also help ease pressure on our acute hospital site at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. The enhancement of facilities at WBCH, including extended opening hours, will help improve access to diagnostic services. We know that the number of people currently waiting for elective surgery is, in part, linked to health inequalities so this increase in diagnostic capacity will really help with our work to address issues of inequality in access and outcomes," he added.

### **Work to ensure safe and steady discharges from the hospitals**



Following the Covid pandemic a new way of working has been introduced in Berkshire West to help patients return home quickly and safely after a spell in hospital.

Teams made up of health and social care professionals work together to support patients who no longer need hospital care but would benefit from a carefully planned discharge either back home or to the most appropriate place to be looked after.

As part of this process the clinical teams will talk to the patient and their family or carers about discharge planning, travel arrangements and the range of after-care available. Social workers are often involved in these discussions and any ongoing care or support needed after discharge is agreed at this stage. Social workers will arrange payment of ongoing support for eligible patients and will also guide and advise self-funding patients to source the right care.

Patients ready for discharge from the Acute Hospital but who need ongoing rehabilitation in a bedded setting with 24 hour care will be allocated a bed in one of the community hospitals in the region. The Community Hospital teams will make sure they are assigned an appropriate bed with the rehabilitation that most closely meets their needs. The community hospital offered may not always be the closest to the patient's home – allocation is based on the patient's clinical need, not address.

The new way of working is being led by health professionals at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and in Berkshire Healthcare. By providing this enhanced assistance for patients being discharged, it enables ward staff to devote their time to patients who need urgent care in the hospital.

Jill Gillespie-Shahabi, the System Lead Flow Co-ordinator, said:

“We want to make sure that everyone discharged from hospital is not only medically well enough to leave, but has a network of support available to them to ease their transition back home, or on to a more appropriate healthcare setting. The pressures on hospital services and teams are very well documented and we need to do all we can to try and manage this. Hospitals like the Royal Berkshire are acute settings geared to providing vital care to patients with urgent medical needs and we have a duty to ensure our beds are available and occupied by people who need the skills and services provided by specialist acute clinical teams.

There is also a lot of evidence to show that patients recover better away from hospital. Even short periods in a hospital bed can cause loss of strength in muscles and in some cases people become used to living in hospital and are then less able to manage in their own homes. Staying in hospital presents the very serious risk of patients being much more likely to pick up infections. It's also easier to assess people's ongoing and long term care needs

once they are back home and in familiar surroundings with family and loved ones around them” she added.

**New Roles...  
...who can help you.**

**NHS**  
Berkshire Healthcare  
Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust



**Patient Flow Co-ordinator**

*You'll find me on the ward.*

**MY ROLE IS**

- Work with MDT to promote timely discharge;
- Communicate and update appropriate teams and people regarding discharge planning;
- Attend Board Round;
- Ensure EPR is accurate in relation to discharge process.

How to contact a Patient Flow Co-ordinator?  
Available on the ward



**Complex DC Liaison Practitioner**

*You'll find me on the internet.*

**MY ROLE IS**

- Offer education, advice and support for complex discharge cases, such as:
- Homelessness;
- Funding streams (IFR/CHC/Private funders/Section 117);
- Court of Protection (CoP);
- Lasting Power of Attorney.

How to contact a CDLP?  
Referral via EPR, OR Email: rbb-tr.complex.discharge@nhs.net  
Telephone: 8883 / 8156



**Hospital Discharge Team**

*You'll find us in the DC Hub Level 1*

*You'll find us on the internet. We work from home.*

**OUR ROLE IS**

- Accept trusted assessor referrals through DC Hub for Pathways 1-3;
- Manage the MOFD and RTG lists;
- Liaise with acute hospital wards, LA and community to coordinate and facilitate timely discharges.

How to contact a HDC?  
Referral via EPR, OR Email: rbb-tr.ids@nhs.net  
Telephone: 8680 / 5603



**Safety Net Team**

*You'll find us in the DC Hub Level 1*

*You'll find us on the internet. We work from home.*

**OUR ROLE IS**

- Contact patients who go home without support.
- Identify persons at risk and arrange community support.

How to contact us?  
Email: DSN@royalberkshire.nhs.uk  
Telephone: 07475 212648



**ESD Early Supported DC Service**

*You'll find us in the DC Hub Level 1*

**OUR ROLE IS**

- Assess patients' homes to ensure safe and suitable for return.
- Take patients home and support until community take over.

How to contact us?  
Referral via EPR, OR Email: rbb-tr.ids@nhs.net  
Telephone: 8680 / 5603

**Discharge Patient Pathways**

- 0** No additional needs  
Patient returns to usual place of residence.
- 1** Additional support at home  
Patient returns to usual place of residence with interim support.
- 2** Rehab +/- Reablement  
Patient transferred to non-acute bed and receives care/support until able to safely return to usual residence.
- 3** Complex  
Patient transferred to long-term bed or usual residence to receive complex support needed.

home early  settled & safe

Compassionate Aspirational Resourceful Excellent

14 April 2021

### Top award for three hospital nurses

Three nurses from the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust were awarded coveted awards from NHS England’s Chief Nursing Officer Ruth May during her visit to Reading’s Royal Berkshire Hospital today.



From left to right: Simon Wells, Emer Diego, Ruth May, Dr Mandy O’ Dell



The Chief Nursing Officer awards were introduced in 2019 to recognise the value of nurses and midwives.

Dr Mandy O'Dell, Nurse Consultant for Critical Care received a gold award for her outstanding work on numerous improvement and research projects during her long career. Mandy is an internationally recognised leader, speaker and ambassador. She continues to work at the Trust after her retirement leading the Hospital Out of Hours Transformation project.

Emer Diego, Practice Development Nurse received a silver award for supporting hundreds of overseas nurses at the Trust. Originally from the Philippines, Emer's leadership, innovation and caring manner is regularly cited by his colleagues. Since joining the Trust's practice development team 2 years ago, Emer has been at the forefront of transforming our hospital to a more diverse organisation, representative of the community we serve.

Simon Wells, Lead Nurse Infection Prevention & Control received his silver award for working tirelessly throughout the extraordinary challenge of the Covid 19 pandemic ensuring patient and staff safety. Throughout and outside of Covid-19, Simon worked above and beyond to keep abreast of the latest intelligence, analyse data, and advise and support his colleagues.

Eamonn Sullivan MBE, Chief Nurse Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust said: "I'm enormously proud of our three award winners today and delighted that their outstanding contributions to caring for the people in our community, have been recognised. Each of the winners work in very different fields and reflect the diverse range of responsibilities within the nursing profession".

### **Chair Designate appointed to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board**

Javed Khan has been appointed the Chair Designate of the establishing Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) following an appointment process managed by NHS England and NHS Improvement and agreed by the Secretary of State. Javed will be ready to take up the post from April 2022 should Parliament confirm current plans in the new [NHS Health and Care Bill](#).



For the past seven years Javed has led Barnardo's, the largest children's charity in the UK. With over 800 delivery programmes, a large retail footprint, and services in all four nations of the UK, the charity supports over 380,000 vulnerable children, young people, their families and carers each year. Javed's non-executive board roles have included NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, Hospital Trusts and local government.

Javed began his career as a school teacher in the West Midlands, and made rapid progress, becoming head of department, assistant principal and then director of development in a large further education college. He then entered local government as an Assistant Director in Birmingham's acclaimed Education Services and then to Director of Education in a London borough.

Javed says of his appointment: "I'm delighted to have been appointed as the Chair Designate of the BOB Integrated Care Board. I believe this is a rare opportunity to help put patients and high-quality local health outcomes at the centre of decision making. I look forward to working with all our local partners to develop a long-term strategy that will achieve this."