

Oxford – Astra Zeneca Covid-19 vaccine

FAQs – related to incidence of PE/DVT (blood clots)

Why is it in the news?

There have been a small number of cases of DVT/PE – blood clots in legs or lungs in patients who have had the Oxford AZ vaccine. It is important to remember that nearly 20 million doses of Oxford AZ vaccine have been safely given all over the world.

Should you be getting the vaccine if you are booked to get your Oxford AZ jab?

YES. Everyone who is offered a covid vaccine should take the vaccine as planned.

Should I insist on getting Pfizer vaccine instead?

NO. We have no control over the supply chain and insisting on Pfizer is likely to delay your vaccination putting you and your loved ones at much higher risk of Covid and it's complications. (2)

Should I avoid vaccination altogether due to risk of blood clots?

NO. You should get your Covid vaccine when offered. Getting Coronavirus infection itself increases your risk of getting DVT or PE (blood clots). Studies have shown that up to 20-30% (or more when admitted to ICU) of critically ill Covid patients develop DVT or PE. (1)

Facts about blood clots DVT/PE

- 1 per 1000 in any adult population can have DVT or PE in any given year (9, 10)
- Between 2 – 12 per 1000 women on HRT (Hormone replacement therapy) or Oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) can develop DVT or PE. (6, 7, 8)
- 1 in 3 patients admitted to hospitals for any operations are at risk of developing a DVT or PE (blood clots) without preventive treatment. (4, 5)
- 15 out of 100 people with a diagnosis of cancer can develop DVT or PE (3)
- patients who are pregnant, obese, with history of long immobilisation and many other conditions are at substantially increased risk of developing DVT or PE (blood clots).
- DVT or PE is a serious and relatively common blood clot condition which can develop entirely unrelated to Covid vaccination. You should immediately seek medical advice from your GP or 111 or nearest AE if you are worried that you may have DVT or PE. You can get further information about DVT or PE from www.nhs.uk (13, 14).

Overwhelming numbers of experienced doctors, research scientists, WHO (World Health Organization), MHRA UK (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency), EMA (European Medicines Agency) have all advised that the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine is safe to use in all groups of patients. (11, 12)

There is extremely good evidence that the Oxford AZ vaccine reduces the risk of catching Covid infection, minimises the risk of hospitalisation with Covid illness while also reducing the risk of spreading Covid infection to other people.

Hence it is important to have your Covid vaccines when you are sent an invitation to book your appointment. **It is safe and extremely important that you have either the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine or the Pfizer vaccine when offered.**

1. <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2058>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7940863/>
3. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/treatment/cancer-and-the-risk-of-blood-clots>
4. <https://www.chelwest.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-leaflets/support-services/are-you-at-risk-of-blood-clots>
5. <https://thrombosisuk.org/thrombosis-statistics.php>
6. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6714678/>
7. <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/news/behind-the-headlines/hrt-and-blood-clot-risk>
8. <https://www.bmj.com/content/364/bmj.k4810>
9. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S003719630700025X?via%3Dihub>
10. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2020806/#:~:text=Venous%20thrombosis%2C%20comprising%20deep%20vein,PE%20with%20or%20without%20DVT.>
11. <https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-how-common-have-blood-clots-been-after-the-astrazeneca-jab-and-should-we-be-worried-12246472>
12. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55302595>
13. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis-dvt/>
14. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism/>