

New data show vaccines reduce severe COVID-19 in older adults

Today Public Health England (PHE) has submitted a [pre-print of a real-world study](#) that shows that both the Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines are highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections among older people aged 70 years and over. Since January, protection against symptomatic COVID, 4 weeks after the first dose, ranged between 57 and 61% for one dose of Pfizer and between 60 and 73% for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

The pre-print article:

- compares the rate of vaccination in symptomatic people aged over 70 years of age who test positive for COVID-19, compared to those who test negative
- compares the rate of hospitalisation in confirmed COVID-19 cases aged over 80 who were vaccinated more than 14 days before testing positive, compared to unvaccinated cases
- compares the rate of deaths in confirmed COVID-19 cases aged over 80 who were vaccinated with Pfizer vaccine more than 14 days before testing positive, compared to unvaccinated cases

In the over 80s, data suggest that a single dose of either vaccine is more than 80% effective at preventing hospitalisation, around 3 to 4 weeks after the jab. There is also evidence for the Pfizer vaccine, which suggests it leads to an 83% reduction in deaths from COVID-19.

The data also shows symptomatic infections in over 70s decreasing from around 3 weeks after one dose of both vaccines.

The new analysis adds to growing evidence that the vaccines are working and are highly effective in protecting people against severe illness, hospitalisation and death.

Dr Mary Ramsay, PHE Head of Immunisation, said:

“This adds to growing evidence showing that the vaccines are working to reduce infections and save lives.

“While there remains much more data to follow, this is encouraging and we are increasingly confident that vaccines are making a real difference.

“It is important to remember that protection is not complete and we don’t yet know how much these vaccines will reduce the risk of you passing COVID-19 onto others.

“Even if you have been vaccinated, it is it is really important that you continue to act like you have the virus, practise good hand hygiene and stay at home.

From this week, the NHS has started to deliver second doses to those people vaccinated first, which will provide higher and longer lasting protection.

[Separate studies](#) in healthcare workers show that one dose of the vaccine is preventing people from catching asymptomatic COVID-19 by at least 70%. This will help to reduce the spread of infection in hospitals and care homes, ultimately offering more protection to these vulnerable populations.