
FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AROUND THE VACCINE

As the COVID-19 vaccines are now being rolled out across Northern Ireland we have seen cases decline of Covid 19 decline and less people are in hospital than at any time since the start of the pandemic. These are all positive step in the right direction and we can being to look forward to a time when the coronavirus is no longer dominating our lives.

However, it is easy to be overcome with many emotions during this newest stage in the pandemic. While many are eagerly awaiting their turn to receive the vaccinations, others may feel anxiety around the decision.

If you have feelings of worry or anxiety about the vaccine, we've set out some tips to help you through:

Your feelings are valid:

The first thing to remember is that feelings of anxiety or worry are valid. It's ok to ask questions about something as important as receiving anew vaccine and your concerns should be taken seriously.

Work out why you are worried.

If you are feeling nervous or worried about receiving the vaccine the first step is to thinking about why you are feeling this way. Maybe you are worried about the effects of the vaccine on your body, you might feel guilt that others are more deserving of the vaccine before you or you are angry that others have got the vaccine before you or the people you care about. It's also understandable to be worried about the process itself – getting to the vaccination centre, what will happened when you are there, concerns about being out in public again after so long at home. It might help to write the reasons down or talk about them with someone. Whatever way you do it thinking through and understanding why you are worried is the best first step to getting back control.

There are some great resources like the [worry](#) pocket guide by the PHA or tools you can use to help you [manage your anxiety](#) during the pandemic to help you.

Get good information to help you make a decision.

Right now, we are all reading information and opinions about the new COVID-19 vaccines from all directions: the news, the internet, your social media feeds, your friends and family. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp all have their uses but the COVID-related content posted on each can be unreliable. It's important to check where your information is coming from and understand if they are providing accurate, up to date information. The Public Health Agency has a useful [information hub providing](#) good information including a detailed Frequently Asked Questions section and a useful [Simple Guide to the Covid19 Vaccination Programme](#).

You can ease your concerns by reading more about how to [inform yourself](#) with this helpful guide from MindWise. Don't allow disinformation and misinformation to undermine your wellbeing and worsen any fears you have.

Focus on what you can control.

When things are beyond our control, like the Covid pandemic, it is essential to focus on what we can control, no matter how small they may be. If you start to worry or feel overwhelmed, think of the stress relievers that help you cope. Go for a walk, make yourself a cup of tea, unplug from your digital devices, and acknowledge your thoughts. This new reality affects us all in different ways, and it can be very overwhelming. So, it's important to slow down, to let yourself feel your emotions and to focus on what you have control of.

To help you manage your worries, you can check out [our fact sheet](#) on coping during the pandemic. Our [self-help guide](#) and advice around [panic attacks](#) are also really useful. If you are experiencing stress, you can learn more about how to tackle and reduce it at this [link](#).

The [COVID Wellbeing NI](#) website features numerous handy tips on promoting good mental health in these challenging times.

The website also offers a series of self-help toolkits to support good mental health, including guided programmes addressing [breathing space](#), [self-care](#), [sleep](#) and [worry](#). All of these materials are listed [here](#).

[A range of organisations](#) are ready and willing to assist if you are worried or distressed. Click on the links below for details on:

[Practical COVID-19 support](#)

[Apps supporting your health](#)

[Support for children, young people and families](#)

[Mental health services](#)

[Health and social care contacts](#)

Other useful links:

For more information on the vaccination process and who is eligible visit: [COVID-19 vaccination – a guide for adults and translations | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#)

For more information on what to expect, side effects and next steps visit: [COVID-19 vaccination – What to expect and translations | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#)

Both these links also have access to plain text, Browsealoud and translations .

You can, of course, also talk to your GP. However, for immediate help if you are in distress of despair, call [Lifeline](#) on **0808 808 8000**.

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