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# VACCINE ANXIETY



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The Covid-19 vaccines are still available for everyone above the age of 12 in Northern Ireland. Now, in order to encourage more people to get their jabs and keep them safer in certain settings, the Northern Ireland Executive has decided to implement a domestic Covid certificate.

The certificate proves that the holder has received both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine and it is similar to the pass many have used for travelling outside the UK and Ireland during 2021. The new domestic certificate is required to visit hospitality venues in Northern Ireland, including restaurants, bars, cinemas, museums and large events. It is **not** required to go into shops and pharmacies.

While many people are eagerly awaiting the booster jabs that will maximise their protection against the virus, others are worried about the prospect of receiving the vaccine for the first time.

If you're hesitant or anxious, we've set out some tips to help you through:

### **Your feelings are valid**

The first thing to remember is that it's perfectly acceptable to want to become better informed about something as important as this. Your concerns should be taken seriously.

### **Work out why you are worried**

Ask yourself why you're feeling this way. Maybe you're worried about the effects of the vaccine or maybe you're fearful of the process itself – things like getting to the vaccination clinic, and what happens once you're there, or going out in public again if you've been staying close to home. It might help to write down these feelings or talk about them with a friend or family member. Whatever you do, thinking through and understanding your worries is the best first step to taking back control.

There are some great resources available. The Public Health Agency's [Worry Pocket Guide](#) and this [self-help guide for managing anxiety](#) are both excellent.

### **Get good information**

Right now, we're all exposed to data and opinions from various sources: the news, the internet, social media, 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 and come from anywhere. It's important to consider the source of this material and only act according to expert, accurate and up-to-date advice. The Public Health Agency has set up a very useful [online hub](#), which includes a detailed FAQs section and a simple guide to the vaccination programme.

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

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## **Focus on what you can control**

In situations like a pandemic, it is essential to focus on the things we can control, no matter how small they are. If you start to worry or feel overwhelmed, think of the stress relievers that help you cope. Go for walk, make yourself a cup of tea, unplug from those digital devices and acknowledge your thoughts. The current reality affects us all in different ways and it can seem overwhelming. So, it's important to slow down and feel your emotions. Check out our fact sheet on [panic attacks](#) and [coping with anxiety](#). You can learn more about tackling stress [here](#).

[Covid Wellbeing NI](#) has some very useful resources to help you look after your **emotional and mental health**, these include dedicated sections relating to:

- [Anger](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Wellbeing](#)

**And remember, if you are in distress or despair, you can always call Lifeline on:**

**0808 808 8000**

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