

Covid Vaccine Given Abroad – FAQ

Vallance Vaccination Clinic

21/12/21

Guide written by Dr Tony Gu, Clinical Director for the Vallance Covid Vaccine clinic and GP at Vallance Medical Centre

Please note this guide was written on the 21st December 2021. These rules are constantly changing so please check the information is up to date.

We typically divide Covid-19 Vaccines into two categories:

1. Approved to be given in the UK
2. those not approved to be given in the UK.

The UK approved vaccines to be given in the UK are:

- Astrazeneca (AZ, Covishield, Vaxzevira)
- Pfizer BioNTech (Comirnaty)
- Moderna (Spikevax)
- Johnson & Johnson (Janssen)

The UK also approves of 3 other vaccines for ENTRY into the UK for travel purposes, but these are not approved to be given in the UK vaccination programme nor for the Covid Vaccine Pass:

- Covaxin (Bharat)
- Sinovac (KeXing, Coronavac)
- Sinopharm (BBIBP-CorV, BIBP, VeroCell)

In this guide, “UK approved” means approved to be given in the UK (Pfizer, AZ, Janssen and Moderna).

I had a UK approved vaccine abroad, can I have the second dose or booster in the UK?

If the jab given were AZ/Pfizer/Moderna – then we would treat your vaccination as the same as if it was given in the UK.

If you needed a second dose or booster we can give you these without any problems. We can record them on the UK records as the relevant second or booster dose.

I had my vaccine in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The four UK countries have different IT databases and these are not yet talking to each other. If you have had your vaccine in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland you will not have the vaccine on your GP records in England and vice versa. It will be the same as if you had the vaccine abroad. We believe the UK government is trying to merge these eventually.

Dr Ngan, Wilkinson and Gu

You can access individual Covid Passes through the NHS Scotland, NHS Wales and NHS NI pages:

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-travel-covid-vaccination-certificate>

Scotland: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19status>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/get-your-nhs-covid-pass>

There are separate pages for Guernsey, Isle of Man and Jersey.

I had a different vaccine abroad that is not approved in the UK

There are multiple covid vaccines used abroad. Most of these that we see are World Health Organisation approved but not approved to be used by the UK government. In particular, the Chinese, Russian and Indian developed vaccines fall into these categories and are responsible for the majority of queries we get asked about.

- Sinovac (KeXing, Coronavac)
- Sinopharm (BBIBP-CorV, BIBP, VeroCell)
- Sputnik (Gamelaya, Gam-Covid-Vac)
- Covaxin (Bharat)

NHS England have released some guidance about these and their equivalence to the UK approved vaccines.

If you had one non-UK vaccine, you should have the UK SECOND dose and then have the booster.

If you had two non-UK vaccines less than 12 weeks ago, you should have a UK SECOND dose and then have the booster.

If you had two non-UK vaccines more than 12 weeks ago, you should have a UK BOOSTER.

If you have had three non-UK vaccines, you should also have a UK BOOSTER.

Please note, this has replaced previous guidance that two Non-UK doses equals one UK dose – this **guidance changed on the 21st December 2021**. The guidance can be read here on page 44-46:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042558/COVID-19-vaccine-information-for-healthcare-practitioners-21Dec21.pdf

Please note, if you have non-UK approved vaccines abroad, and then have a partial course of vaccines in the UK, you will have an incomplete UK Covid Vaccine Pass. This may make it difficult for you to prove Covid vaccination for travel and other purposes (please see the section below about Covid Pass). It may be worth considering completing a full UK course of Covid vaccines if this is an important factor for you.

Having the UK approved vaccines after having other vaccines has been proven in many research trials to be safe and sometimes more effective than a single type of vaccine.

If I had vaccines abroad how do I get a Covid Vaccine Pass?

The Covid Vaccine Pass is a UK method of proving you are vaccinated. It is used in travel and sometimes for professional or leisure purposes. There is a specific pass for travel and one for leisure and other purposes.

Only vaccines given in the UK will automatically appear on the UK Covid pass. The pass is accessed via the NHS app, but can also be requested from the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/>

For those who had UK approved Covid vaccines abroad, you can request to have these added onto your Covid Pass through the NHS page here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/tell-nhs-about-coronavirus-vaccinations-abroad/>

If you had non-UK approved vaccines abroad, currently there is no way to get these added onto your Covid Vaccine pass. It is our opinion that this will not change very quickly either. We know this is a stressful issue for travel in particular. Each airline has its own rules about how to accept evidence for vaccinations, and vaccine requirements will vary from country to country too.

For example, travel to the European Union is possible with a full UK Covid Pass as the EU and the UK have an agreement to recognise each other's Covid Pass. However, if you have had vaccines which are not approved by the EMA (European Medicines Authority), then you will need to check with individual EU country that you are travelling to whether they will accept your vaccinations. As of September 2021, 9 EU countries accepted the SinoVac and 10 EU countries accepted the Sinopharm vaccine.

VisaGuide has released a helpful tool for travellers trying to identify vaccine requirements for different countries (please note this is an external website which we cannot be responsible for):

<https://visaguide.world/news/vaccine-checker-proof-of-immunity-for-travel/>

Furthermore, having a mix of UK and non-UK vaccines can make deciding whether you are fully vaccinated difficult for individual countries.

How does the vaccination get recorded on the IT system?

The records from the vaccination today will appear on the NHS national data input service (PharmaOutcomes) which then uploads to another database called NIMS. NIMS then talks directly to GP records.

Most vaccines will get recorded but some will not due to one of the following possibilities

1. Human error
2. Database error (not able to transfer between databases)
3. Other technical IT problem (eg No NHS number)

The whole process takes about 4-5 days.

Do I need an NHS number or be registered with a GP to have my vaccination?

You do not need either but you are unable to access the Covid passport without both a GP registration and an NHS number.

An NHS number takes about 10 days to generate after registration with a GP.