Oxford vaccine approved: Here are 10 reasons you should get vaccinated

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Credit: AI-generated image (disclaimer)

The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for use in the UK, meaning that millions more vaccine doses can now be delivered in the country. This will speed up progress towards achieving widespread immunity to the coronavirus.

However, since the start of the pandemic—and particularly since vaccines for COVID-19 started being developed—many people have [expressed concerns](#) about their safety and effectiveness.

If you're among those feeling hesitant about getting a COVID-19 vaccine—or if you're wondering why vaccines are considered one of [humanity's greatest achievements](#) – here are 10 reasons why you should consider getting vaccinated.

1. Because vaccines save lives

Things have come a long way since Edward Jenner [first vaccinated](#) a young boy against smallpox in 1796. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that vaccination currently [prevents 2 million to 3 million deaths](#) every year.

Smallpox, which claimed approximately [300 million lives](#) in the 20th century alone, has been fully eradicated thanks to the development and implementation of safe and effective vaccines.

For some people today, COVID-19 also proves fatal. If you're at [high risk](#) from the [disease](#), getting vaccinated could save your life.

2. To protect your health

Vaccines also protect us from many debilitating illnesses.

Prior to the development of the Salk and Sabin vaccines for polio, it was common to see dramatic images of people using [iron lungs](#) or [paralyzed children](#). But over the last three decades, vaccines have led to a [99.9% reduction](#) in polio cases.

COVID-19 can also have [long-lasting health effects](). Vaccines will protect you against these too.

3. To protect and support health services

Being vaccinated as a child means that you're less likely to contract infectious diseases over your lifetime. This relieves [pressure on health service staff](), who can then dedicate their efforts, funds and equipment to helping patients with non-preventable illnesses.

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 will help in exactly the same way—freeing up resources by lowering case numbers and preventing [further backlogs]() of other treatments.

4. To protect the vulnerable

When enough people are vaccinated against an infectious disease like COVID-19, it can be effectively stopped from spreading, because there are too few people to infect. This is known as [herd immunity]().

Reaching herd immunity means that even those who cannot receive the vaccination (for example due to [pre-existing conditions]()) are protected.

5. Because they're rigorously tested

Vaccines are tested in long and large clinical trials that involve tens of thousands of people, and their effects are monitored even after they have been approved. The thorough way in which vaccines are developed means that they are [far safer and have fewer side-effects]() than most existing medications.

Vaccines for COVID-19 are being tested in the same way as vaccines for

other diseases. They have been developed quickly thanks to cutting red tape, not because safety testing has been any less thorough.

6. To save time and money

Vaccines have been widely recognized as one of the most time- and cost-effective medical interventions you can have. Receiving a vaccination only takes a few minutes and is very cheap (or, for many people, free).

On the other hand, contracting an infectious disease means taking time off from school or work and potentially racking up hefty medical bills.

7. To be able to travel safely

Traveling to other countries exposes you to pathogens your immune system is not familiar with. By receiving the vaccinations recommended for your destination, you'll be able to enjoy your holiday without this risking an emergency visit to a local hospital or bringing back unwanted bugs.

Likewise, keeping up to date with your recommended vaccination schedule protects the inhabitants of your holiday destination from any infections you may otherwise carry with you. For this reason, COVID-19 vaccines could become mandatory for travel as they are rolled out.

8. To limit drug resistance

Antimicrobial resistance has been identified by the WHO as one of the 10 greatest threats to global health (as has vaccine hesitancy). The continuous overuse of antibiotic and antiviral drugs causes bacteria and viruses to become resistant to them, resulting in untreatable infections spreading.

By preventing us from getting infected in the first place, vaccinations allow us to reduce our use of antibiotics and antivirals, therefore limiting the insurgence of drug-resistant strains of bacteria and viruses.

9. To protect future generations

Over the course of history, humanity has had to coexist with many [debilitating and life-threatening diseases](#) that are now very rare thanks to childhood vaccination programs.

However, the pandemic provides a dramatic example of the devastating global effect that a single disease can have in the absence of a [vaccine](#). Immunizing ourselves and our children against infectious diseases today is an invaluable gift to future generations. Suppressing diseases in the present will allow people in the future to live longer and healthier lives.

10. To prevent the spread of fake news

Research has shown that fake news [spreads much faster and farther](#) than truthful information. Over the last few decades, [conspiracy theories](#) and misinformation have eroded public trust in vaccines, leading to the [re-emergence of nearly eradicated diseases](#) in many countries.

By following evidence-based guidance from the scientific and medical community, you are not only protecting yourself and your loved ones from [infectious diseases](#), but also setting an example that helps fight back against the diffusion of misinformation.

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