

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

COVID-19 vaccine booster doses

COVID-19 vaccine booster doses will now be offered to all adults aged 18 years and over, at least 3 months (12 weeks) after the second dose.

Booster doses have been offered in order of descending age groups, with priority given to older adults and those at higher risk of COVID-19.

The following groups are invited to book an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine booster at least 3 months (12 weeks) after their second dose using the [online portal](#):

- all adults aged 18 years or over
- adults aged 16 years or over with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19
- adult carers aged 16 or over
- household contacts (aged 16 or over) of immunosuppressed individuals
- frontline health and social care workers.

For people who cannot book online, you can book an appointment by calling the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013 (open 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week).

A video explaining how to book using the online system is available at https://youtu.be/PiEd6-r_dKU.

If adults have recently tested positive for COVID-19, they should wait until 4 weeks after the date they were tested to get any dose of the vaccine, even if they had no symptoms.

COVID-19 vaccine second doses for children and young people

All children and young people aged 12 to 17 years are now eligible for two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Most will be offered a second dose from around 12 weeks after their first dose.

Children and young people aged 12 to 15 years will likely receive letters with an appointment for their second dose from January.

Young people aged 16 and 17 years can book an appointment for their second dose [online](#) or by calling 0800 030 8013. They should book a date at least 12 weeks since their first dose. If they have recently tested positive for COVID-19 they should ideally wait 12 weeks after the date they were tested to get the vaccine.

Children and young people in the following groups will be offered a second dose from 8 weeks:

- those who are at increased risk from COVID-19 due to underlying health conditions
- those who live with someone who is immunosuppressed
- those aged 16 or 17 years who are an unpaid carer or a frontline health or social care worker.

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

Will I be offered a flu vaccine at the same time as a COVID-19 booster dose?

Due to the new Omicron variant, NHS Scotland is rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine programme more quickly as a priority and will no longer be offering flu alongside COVID-19 boosters at community clinics. Overall, with the amount of flu infections being lower this season, and with precautions being taken (such as face masks, hand washing and sanitising) and those in the highest risk of flu having taken up the flu vaccine in high numbers prior to Mid-December, we are now focusing more on COVID-19 boosters.

Low risk groups will no longer be offered flu vaccine this season. This includes:

- teachers, nursery teachers and pupil facing support staff (in both local authority and independent settings)
- prison officers and support staff who deliver direct detention services
- those aged 50 to 64 years old without underlying risk factors.

If you are in a high-risk group for flu, you can still have flu vaccine this winter season (but not in a COVID-19 vaccination community clinic):

- pregnant women
- those aged 65 years or older
- those with underlying health conditions
- frontline health and social care workers
- adult unpaid carers
- household contacts (aged 16 years or over) of immunosuppressed individuals

If people are in these high-risk groups, they may still have the flu vaccine at an NHS community pharmacy or via their midwife if they are pregnant.

Most children aged 2 to 5 years and primary school pupils have already been offered the flu vaccine this year.

Some areas in Scotland have also completed vaccination of their secondary school pupils. Where they have not been completed, vaccination has been paused. It may begin again in the new year once the Omicron risk is reassessed.

Frontline health and social care workers

Frontline health and social care workers can protect themselves and those they care for from flu and COVID-19 this winter. Health and social care workers can book their COVID-19 booster vaccine – if they've not had it – [online](#). As mentioned above, they can still access the flu vaccine at an NHS community pharmacy.

Resources about the COVID-19 vaccination programme are available for [healthcare workers](#) and [social care workers](#).

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

Waiting time after your COVID-19 vaccination

Due to the Omicron variant, the adult booster programme is being rolled out faster. Given the very low rate of serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), the 15 minute wait has been reduced to 5 minutes, as long as people feel okay. This change has been advised by the 4 UK Chief Medical Officers. It's also supported by the Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

More information is available in the [Waiting after the COVID-19 vaccination](#) leaflet.

Why should people get the COVID-19 vaccine booster dose?

Levels of protection from COVID-19 vaccines may begin to reduce over time. The COVID-19 vaccine booster dose will help extend the protection people gained from their first two doses and give them longer-term protection. A booster can reduce the risk of symptomatic COVID-19 infection by over 80%. It is vital to maximise continued immunity.

How do people book COVID-19 booster vaccine appointments?

If people have not already received their COVID-19 booster vaccine, they can now book an appointment via the [online portal](#). The portal will allow people to book appointments throughout December and into January.

Some areas are offering drop-ins for booster doses. People should visit their Health Board's social media account or visit NHS inform to find out about [drop-in clinics](#) in their local area. If you go to a drop-in clinic to get your COVID-19 vaccine booster but already had a future appointment booked, NHS Scotland will automatically cancel the booked appointment for you.

If people have already received their flu vaccination and are now eligible to book their COVID-19 booster, they should call the national helpline on 0800 030 8013 to make an appointment. They will be unable to book an appointment via the online portal.

When can people have the COVID-19 booster vaccine?

People should book their COVID-19 booster from 3 months (12 weeks) after their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

How do people find out when their second dose was?

People can log in to the [online portal](#) to find their previous dose appointment date. If people are unable to do this, they can call the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013.

How can people log in to the online portal?

People can use the log in details they received from their first or second dose COVID-19 vaccination appointment letters to log in to the [online portal](#).

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

If people have lost or forgotten their vaccination username or password, they can [create new ones](#).

What if people don't have a computer or a smart phone?

People don't need a computer or smart phone to book an appointment. They can book via the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013. The helpline will find a suitable appointment for them.

Does the national vaccination helpline have access to additional appointments?

No, the helpline does not have access to additional appointments. If people cannot find an appointment that suits them online, they should check back later to see if additional appointments have been added.

Are all Health Boards using the online portal and vaccination helpline?

NHS Orkney and NHS Western Isles are not using the online portal or the national vaccination helpline to book appointments.

If a person lives in one of these NHS Health Board areas, they will receive an appointment through the post. People can also check local details on their Health Board's website or social media.

Do people need to book an appointment at the earliest possible date?

The booking portal allows people to book a date and location for an appointment in December and into January, depending on when they were last vaccinated and appointment availability.

People should check the interval since their last vaccination before booking an appointment.

- Adults should book appointments for COVID-19 booster doses at least 12 weeks after their second dose. If people have tested positive for COVID-19 they should wait until 4 weeks after a positive test to get the booster vaccine.
- Young people aged 16 and 17 years should book appointments for second doses 12 weeks after their first dose. If young people have tested positive for COVID-19 they should wait until 12 weeks after a positive test to get the vaccine.

People can find the date of their last vaccination by visiting the [online portal](#) or checking their vaccination certificate, if they have one.

Can people reschedule appointments?

People can reschedule [appointments online](#).

If people do not attend their appointment and didn't reschedule it, they will not be able to book a new appointment online. They will need to phone the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013.

Where can people get their vaccination?

People can book an appointment at a location of their choice. An appointment can be booked in another Health Board area if easier.

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

What is the ‘third primary dose’ for people with a severely weakened immune system?

A third primary dose is an extra ‘top-up’ dose to help increase the level of protection for people who may not have generated a full immune response to the first two doses and might be less protected than the wider population. A third primary dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is being offered to people with a severely weakened immune system.

A third primary dose is different to a booster dose. A booster dose is an additional dose to extend the protection from the primary course of vaccinations. More information can be found at NHS Inform [COVID-19 Third Dose Vaccination](#).

What if people have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in England, but now live in Scotland?

People should call the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013 to create a Community Health Index (CHI) number, in order to create a vaccination record in Scotland so that they can have an appointment booked.

What if people have moved from one area of Scotland to another?

People can book [online](#) or by calling the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013.

How can people receive their first or second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?

- They can register online to receive a first dose at [NHS Inform](#), or contact the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013.
- They can attend vaccination [drop-in clinics](#) to receive a first or second dose in their local area.

Can pregnant women have the COVID-19 booster vaccine?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine is strongly recommended in pregnancy. Vaccination is the best way to protect pregnant women and their babies against the known risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that pregnant women of any age should be prioritised as a clinical risk group for COVID-19 vaccination.

It is important that pregnant women get all the recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, including the booster, as soon as possible. The vaccine can be given at any stage during pregnancy.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy visit NHS Inform [COVID-19 Vaccination Pregnancy](#).

COVID-19 vaccination booster programme Q&A

Last updated 20 December 2021

How to find out more

- Public-facing information is available about [the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) and [the flu vaccination programme](#) on the NHS inform website
- Information for professionals, including those who support people to take up their offer of vaccination, is available about [the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) and [the flu vaccination programme](#) on the Public Health Scotland website
- Information materials in other languages and formats are available for [the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) and [the flu vaccination programme](#). Information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme is available in [other languages](#), including:

[Arabic](#)

[Farsi](#)

[Hungarian](#)

[Latvian](#)

[Lithuanian](#)

[Polish](#)

[Romanian](#)

[Russian](#)

[Slovakian](#)

[Simplified Chinese](#)

[Traditional Chinese](#)

[Urdu](#)