

## COVID-19 Vaccination

### People aged 12 and over who have a weakened immune system

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As NHS, charity and community leaders join together to encourage people with a weakened immune system to continue to book in or visit a walk-in centre for their COVID-19 vaccines, this toolkit provides refreshed information and resources to help ensure your networks know how they can get protected against the virus.

Its contents have been tested and developed with charity partners. We hope you find it useful and encourage you to share any feedback, so that it can continue to evolve and respond to any questions being raised by people in your community.

We would like to encourage you to ensure your platforms are updated with this latest messaging. We would welcome anything you can do to raise awareness, so that everyone who needs a vaccine knows when and how they should get it.

#### **There are a number of ways you can help:**

1. Share the open letter to patients with a weakened immune system on your website, social media and through newsletters (document included in the covering email)
2. Upload to your website the section of this toolkit on 'getting the vaccine' (pages 2 – 3). Additionally, you may want to add the part on 'third doses for people who are severely immunosuppressed' (page 3) if this is applicable – the JCVI publishes a full list of eligibility criteria for third doses [here](#). There are also some FAQs you can include (pages 3 – 5)
3. Post regular content on social media – there are some helpful resources on pages 5 – 6
4. Include updates in bulletins and newsletters
5. If you operate a helpline, ensure staff are briefed on the latest information
6. Produce leaflets tailored for your network
7. Continue feeding back to us any issues that need attention and suggest additional steps we can take together to improve access to vaccination

Get in touch by emailing [nhs.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net) if you have any questions or would like to find a time to speak to us directly.

## Getting the vaccine

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advises all individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed should receive a Spring booster dose of the vaccine.

If you are immunosuppressed, either due to a health condition or medical treatment, you may not yet have the best protection you can possibly get from the vaccine.

You should usually be contacted by the NHS when you are due a Spring booster. Please do take up this offer. If you haven't heard and you think you may be eligible then you can book a vaccination or find a convenient local walk-in site.

The JCVI recommends that people with a weakened immune system receive their Spring booster as close as possible to six months after their last dose for maximum protection. However, the booster can be given from three months where necessary, depending on individual circumstances.

The NHS has made some changes which means it has never been easier to get your booster if you are immunosuppressed. After booking, you can bring one of several documents to the appointment to confirm you are eligible. This should be one of the following:

- A letter from your GP or specialist advising you get the jab
- A hospital letter about your condition or medication
- A prescription or medication box with your name and a date on it

If you don't have any of this evidence to hand, don't worry. It may still be possible to get vaccinated, just speak to a clinician when you arrive for your appointment.

Vaccination appointments can be booked quickly and conveniently by visiting [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination), where you can also find out which vaccines you are eligible for.

There are three ways you can access your vaccination:

- Make an appointment through the national booking service
- Call 119 to book an appointment (calls are free and translators are available on request)
- Find a walk-in site (not every walk-in site is able to offer vaccination for people who are immunosuppressed, so please use the NHS' online finder to make sure you choose the right site for you)

Whether one of your vaccines is overdue or you haven't had your first yet, please be assured that it isn't too late.

Please let the NHS know if you have any difficulty accessing your vaccination so that the issue can be resolved and services can be improved.

There are a number of ways you can contact NHS England. Information about how to get in touch is available [here](#) on their website.

### **Third doses for people who are severely immunosuppressed**

If someone was severely immunosuppressed when they had their first two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, either due to a health condition or medical treatment, they are eligible for a third dose.

If you are severely immunosuppressed, you should have three doses as your primary course, with the third dose given eight weeks after the second, and then you are eligible for a booster at three months and a further booster between three to six months after.

The **severely immunosuppressed** group includes some people who had or have:

- A blood cancer (such as leukaemia or lymphoma)
- A weakened immune system due to a treatment (such as steroid medicine, biological therapy, chemotherapy or radiotherapy)
- An organ or bone marrow transplant
- A condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections
- A condition or treatment your specialist advises makes you eligible for a third dose

Not everyone with a weakened immune system is considered severely immunosuppressed.

If you think you are eligible for a third dose but haven't had it yet, you should make an appointment today. Please refer to the section above which has information about how to book in for your vaccine – just remember to bring relevant medical documentation to your appointment if you can.

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## **FAQs**

### **Why should I get my COVID-19 vaccine?**

COVID-19 is still out there and the vaccine offers the best defence against becoming seriously unwell, staying out of hospital and passing on the virus to loved ones and others around you. It is safe, effective and free to all, with thousands of convenient appointments every day. You do not even need to be registered with a GP practice to receive your vaccine.

**If I am in an immunosuppressed group that does not respond well to vaccines, why is it important to continue to get vaccinated?**

Repeated vaccinations will gradually improve your level of antibodies and enhance the other parts of your immune system that respond to COVID-19 infection.

**Is it safe to get so many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

COVID-19 vaccination remains extremely safe. These vaccines have been rigorously tested and multiple doses have been given across the UK and the world, with continued monitoring of safety.

**Why are some people being invited for a Spring booster?**

COVID-19 is more serious for people with a weakened immune system. Protection from the vaccine for these groups may be lower and may decline more quickly. For this reason, people aged 75 and over, those in care homes for older adults and those aged 12 and over with a weakened immune system are being offered the Spring booster.

**My family members who I am in close contact with aren't immunosuppressed but would like to get a Spring booster. Are they eligible?**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has not recommended a Spring booster for household contacts of people who are immunosuppressed.

**Why is the interval for Spring boosters three to six months?**

The NHS is working to get everyone who needs a Spring booster vaccinated by the end of June, to allow maximum protection ahead of winter when viruses circulate most. There is flexibility within the three- to six-month window to ensure that those eligible can get their vaccination during this Spring round. If there are individual circumstances which mean someone cannot get their Spring booster during this period, the opportunity will remain throughout July and August.

**Will individuals be expected to get more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in the future?**

The NHS is preparing to deliver an Autumn dose of the vaccine to people with a weakened immune system following interim advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. JCVI will make its final recommendations later this year to be considered by Government. Following the Government's decision, the NHS will let eligible people know when they can get an Autumn booster.

**What adjustments are being made to support people who are severely immunosuppressed attending walk-in vaccination appointments?**

Vaccination sites have been asked to ensure that appropriate arrangements and reasonable adjustments are in place, such as priority lanes, to support people who are less able to queue, including those in higher-risk groups. A poster is available highlighting that staff should ensure people who are immunosuppressed, alongside other priority groups, have their wait time reduced.

## I have recently recovered from COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. You still need to get a booster dose of the vaccine for extra protection, even if you have had COVID-19. If you recently recovered from the virus, you will need to wait before getting any dose of the vaccine. People will need to wait:

- 4 weeks (28 days) for those aged 18 or over, or under 18 and considered to be in a high-risk group
- 12 weeks (84 days) for those aged under 18 and not considered to be in a high-risk group

## Resources

<p><b>NHS England and NHS Improvement</b></p> <p>Factsheet: COVID-19 vaccination – what can you get? (Attached to the covering email)</p>	<p><b>COVID-19 vaccination - what can you get?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IF YOU ARE</th> <th>HOW CAN GET</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>• Aged 16+ if you live in a care home for older adults</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 to 74</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 to 57</td> <td>• Two doses, at least 12 weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults</td> <td>• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>To book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments visit <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/COVID-vaccine">www.nhs.uk/COVID-vaccine</a> or call 119. For information on walk-in sites available near you visit <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/COVID-vaccine-walk-in">www.nhs.uk/COVID-vaccine-walk-in</a>.</p>	IF YOU ARE	HOW CAN GET	• Aged 16+ if you live in a care home for older adults	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 to 74	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 to 57	• Two doses, at least 12 weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose	• Aged 16 and you are or have been in a care home for older adults	• Two doses, at least eight weeks apart • Booster from three months (12 weeks) after the second dose
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<p>Poster: Shorten your booster wait (Attached to the covering email)</p>	<p><b>Shorten your booster wait</b></p> <p>If you are at higher risk from COVID-19, struggle with standing or</p>																		
<p>Open letter: COVID-19 vaccination for people with a weakened immune system</p>	<p><b>Open letter: COVID-19 vaccination for people with a weakened immune system</b></p> <p>26 May 2022</p> <p>To: People in England aged 12 and over with a weakened immune system</p> <p>We join together as NHS and charity leaders to encourage people with a weakened immune system to continue to book in or visit a walk-in centre for their Covid-19 vaccines. All individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed are advised to receive a Spring booster dose of the vaccine, typically six months after their last dose.</p> <p>COVID-19 is still out there and the vaccine offers the best defence against becoming seriously unwell, staying out of hospital and passing on the virus to loved ones and others around you. It is safe, effective and free for everyone, with thousands of convenient appointments every day. You do not even need to be registered with a GP practice to receive your vaccine.</p> <p>If you are immunosuppressed, either due to a health condition or medical</p>																		
<p>Video: <a href="#">COVID-19 vaccination for people with a weakened immune system</a></p>	<p><b>Video: COVID-19 vaccination for people with a weakened immune system</b></p>																		

Assets: Spring boosters for people with a weakened immune system  
(Attached to the covering email)

