



Department of Health & Social Care

All over-50s to be offered COVID-19 booster and flu jab this autumn

Everyone aged 50 and over will be among those offered a COVID-19 booster and a flu jab this autumn under plans to increase protection against respiratory viruses ahead of winter.

On COVID-19 boosters, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has now published its final recommendations for this autumn's programme.

Under the advice, those eligible for a further dose will be:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
- Frontline health and social care workers*
- All adults aged 50 and over
- Those aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group**, including pregnant women
- Those aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- Those aged 16 to 49 years who are carers***

The final eligible groups are broader than those announced in the JCVI's interim advice in May. The committee considered the recent epidemiology of the BA.4 and BA.5 waves, as well as the benefits of aligning the COVID-19 programme with the flu vaccine rollout, concluding that expanding the offer would provide necessary protection to those at higher risk of severe illness and keep greater numbers of people out of hospital.

All eligible groups are encouraged to take up the vaccine when it is offered, even if they have had a spring booster, to give themselves the best possible protection against COVID-19 this winter.

In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will once again be offering the free flu vaccine to additional groups. These groups will only be eligible once the most vulnerable, including previously announced pre-school and primary school children, those aged 65 years and over and those in clinical risk groups, have been offered the jab.

The additional groups set to be offered the free flu vaccine in England will be:

- All adults aged 50 to 64 years
- Secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)

The NHS will announce in due course when and how eligible groups will be able to book an appointment for their COVID-19 autumn booster, and when people aged 50 to 64 years old who are not in a clinical risk group will be able to get their free flu jab.

People in these groups are asked not to come forward until further information is announced.

Commenting on the autumn COVID-19 booster programme, Professor Anthony Harnden, Deputy Chair of the JCVI, said: “We have provided our final recommendations for the autumn programme to ensure the NHS and wider health system has time to plan a vaccine rollout well ahead of the winter season.

“The COVID-19 boosters are highly effective at increasing immunity and, by offering a further dose to those at higher risk of severe illness this autumn, we hope to significantly reduce the risk of hospitalisations and deaths over the winter.”

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at UKHSA, said: “Widening the eligibility for the flu vaccine will help reduce the number of people getting seriously ill and ease pressures on the NHS, particularly during the busy winter period.

“It is also important that everyone eligible for the COVID-19 booster gets the jab when invited, including pregnant women, who are among those at higher risk. Having COVID-19 during pregnancy can lead to complications. Getting the vaccine, including a booster, offers the best possible protection for you and your baby.”

ENDS.

Background:

- *The definition of frontline health and social care workers is published in the [Green Book](#)
- **Clinical risk groups are set out in [the Green Book](#) - Tables 3 and 4
- *** The definition of carers aged 16 to 49 years is set out in the Green Book – Table 3
- The groups that are now eligible for the flu vaccine this coming season are:
 - all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2022
 - all primary school aged children (from reception to Year 6)
 - those aged 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
 - pregnant women
 - those aged 65 years and over
 - those in long-stay residential care homes
 - carers
 - close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
 - frontline staff employed by the following types of social care providers without employer led occupational health schemes:
 - a registered residential care or nursing home
 - registered domiciliary care provider
 - a voluntary managed hospice provider
 - Direct Payment (personal budgets) or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants

And later in the season:

- All adults aged 50 to 64 years
- Secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)
- The flu vaccine programme outlined above applies to England only