



COVID-19 boosters

What is a booster vaccination?

Booster vaccines are an extra dose of a vaccine that is given to 'boost' the protection against a virus or disease. For example, boosters are given for both tetanus and polio.

Why do we need COVID-19 boosters?

Like some other vaccines, protection levels from the Covid vaccines will reduce over time. Having a booster will help extend the protection you got from your first two doses and reduce the risk of you needing to be admitted to hospital due to COVID-19 this winter.

Who can get a COVID-19 booster?

Booster vaccine doses will be offered to people most at risk of COVID-19 who have had a second dose of vaccine at least six months ago. This includes:

- People who live and work in care homes
- People aged 50 and over.
- Frontline health and social care workers.
- People aged 16 and over who are [at high risk from COVID-19 \(clinically extremely vulnerable\)](#).
- People aged 16 and over with a condition that puts them at higher risk from COVID-19
- Unpaid carers aged 16 and over.
- People aged 16 and over living with someone with a weakened immune system (immunosuppressed).
- Pregnant people in any of the above eligible groups.

When will I receive my COVID-19 booster?

To make sure the booster works as well as possible, there needs to be a gap of at least six months between your second dose and your booster. You will receive an invitation when it is your turn, either from the NHS National Booking Service or from your GP.

Evidence shows protection from two doses declines very slowly so don't worry if you receive your booster a few weeks after the six-month point.

Where will I get my COVID-19 booster?

You will be invited to book an appointment at your local GP service or to choose from one of the community or pharmacy vaccination centres available on the National Booking Service. Please don't contact the NHS before then.



Which vaccine will be used for boosters?

You'll be given a booster dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. This is because the evidence from the clinical trials showed that this type of vaccine (called an mRNA or 'messenger' vaccine) gave the best results as a booster, no matter which type of vaccine people had before.

If you are not able to have either of these vaccines due to a severe allergy or other medical reason, it may be possible for you to have the AstraZeneca vaccine instead.

Can I have my flu vaccine and Covid booster at the same time?

Yes, the evidence from the clinical trials showed that it is safe to have these at the same time. However, it may not always be possible to get them together so you should have each vaccination as soon as it is offered rather than waiting to try to get them at the same time.

Are there any side effects from COVID-19 booster vaccines?

As with your previous doses, the common side effects are the same for all COVID-19 vaccines used in the UK. These include:

- A painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm you received your injection in.
- Feeling tired.
- Headache.
- General aches, or mild flu-like symptoms.

The above side effects generally last for less than a week. If they get worse, or you're concerned, you can call NHS 111.

What the experts say

Dr James Thomas, GP and Chair of the West Yorkshire & Harrogate Clinical Forum: "Getting the vaccine remains the best way to protect yourself and those around you from COVID-19 so please do come forward for this top up protection when you're invited."

Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair of COVID-19 Immunisation for the Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation (JCVI): "The UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme has been hugely successful in protecting people against hospitalisation and death, and the main aim of the booster programme is to prolong that protection and reduce serious disease as we head towards the colder months."

Further information:

- [COVID-19: a guide to booster vaccination](#)
- [COVID-19: what to expect after vaccination](#)