

Protect yourself this winter



Protect yourself and your loved ones this winter with the flu vaccine and COVID-19 autumn booster, if eligible.

Why are winter vaccines important?

Vaccination is our best protection against dangerous viruses like flu and COVID-19.

These viruses spread more easily in winter when we spend more time together indoors. Both flu and COVID-19 can cause hospitalisation and could be life-threatening. For some people who catch both at the same time, there is an increased risk of complications – even death.

Winter vaccines are especially important as we get older because our natural immunity



to fight off infections decreases with age. Vaccines are vital for boosting our immunity to protect us from becoming seriously ill.

Vaccine protection, however, fades over time, which is why you should get vaccinated when you are eligible. This helps protect you, those close to you and the health service, which faces another challenging winter.



Protection from flu in 2022

Flu is a highly infectious disease that occurs every year, usually in winter. Each year the flu vaccine helps protect against the most common strains likely to be circulating. This means last year's flu vaccine may not protect you this year.

Symptoms of flu include fever, chills, headache, aching muscles and a sore throat, and because it is a virus, antibiotics won't help.

For people who are usually fit and well, flu can still be a nasty experience leading to serious illnesses, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. Older people and those with underlying health conditions are more likely to experience serious complications and may need to be admitted to hospital.

Who is eligible for the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is for people at greater risk of serious illness from flu or for those people

who can contribute the most to reducing the amount of flu virus circulating.

This year the flu vaccine will be offered to all those noted on the winter vaccines table on page 4. If you're eligible, the best way to protect yourself from catching and spreading flu is to get the flu vaccine in the autumn before flu starts to circulate.

To find out more about the flu vaccine check the winter vaccines table on page 4 or speak to your pharmacist. Alternatively, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/winter-vaccines



Winter vaccines - who is eligible?

The table below shows who is eligible* for each vaccine and where to get vaccinated.

Where to get your vaccine	COVID-19 autumn booster	Flu vaccine
Participating community pharmacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home residents and staff 18+ • Frontline HSC workers 18+ • 50+ • Pregnant women 18+ • 18-49 who are carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home residents and staff 18+ • Frontline HSC workers 18+ • 50+ • Pregnant women 18+ • 18-49 who are carers
GPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50+ • 18-49 clinical risk group • Pregnant women • 18-49 who are carers • 18-49 household contacts of immunosuppressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50+ • 16-49 clinical risk group • Pregnant women • Pre school children • 16-49 who are carers • 16-49 household contacts of immunosuppressed
HSC Trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline HSC workers • Non-frontline HSC workers who are 50+ or 18-49 years in clinical risk group • Pregnant women • 5-17 clinical risk group • 5-17 household contacts of immunosuppressed • 16-17 who are carers • Housebound via home visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline HSC workers • Non-frontline HSC workers who are 50+ or 18-49 years in clinical risk group • Pregnant women • Housebound via home visits
In school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children aged 5-17 who attend a special school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in primaries 1 to year 12

*Eligible groups may change if a new variant starts spreading.

Boost your immunity with the COVID-19 vaccine this winter

COVID-19 is a very infectious respiratory disease caused by coronavirus. Some people infected with COVID-19 don't notice any symptoms, others only experience mild symptoms but for some people it can be serious or even fatal.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and follow the guidelines on www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-19-testing-stay-home-advice where you can also check if you are eligible for a test and certain treatments.

Many people will have already received their primary vaccine course as well as a COVID-19 booster vaccine last winter to help provide extra protection against the Omicron variant. Research shows that protection provided by

the COVID-19 vaccine, like many other vaccines, can fade over time and therefore boosters are recommended to enable this vital protection to continue.

We do not know when future waves of COVID-19 will occur, but winter is the season when the threat from COVID-19 is greatest.

Who is eligible for the COVID-19 autumn booster?

The COVID-19 autumn booster vaccine is being offered to help protect those people most at risk from COVID-19. All those eligible for the autumn booster are noted on the winter vaccines table on page 4.

If you would like more information about the COVID-19 autumn booster, speak to your pharmacist or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/winter-vaccines

Take up the offer of winter vaccination

Vaccines are our best protection against flu and COVID-19.

Each year a different flu strain is in circulation. This is why last year's flu vaccine will not protect you from this year's flu.

Protection from the COVID-19 vaccine can fade over time so it is important you get vaccinated with the autumn booster to keep your protection topped up.

Anyone eligible for either the flu vaccine, COVID-19 autumn booster

or both should refer to the winter vaccines table to find out where to get vaccinated or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/winter-vaccines

For some people, the flu vaccine and COVID-19 autumn booster may be offered at the same time (one vaccine in each arm) or you may be offered on separate occasions. Having both vaccines as the same time is completely safe, but if you prefer to have one vaccine at a time, please speak to your community pharmacist or GP about your concern.



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

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