

BOOST

YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

Vaccines are our best protection this winter as they offer essential protection against dangerous viruses like flu and COVID-19.

Both these viruses can be life-threatening and lead to hospitalisation. For some people, catching flu and COVID-19 at the same time increases the risk of complications and even death. .

Flu and COVID-19 spread easily during the winter when we are spending more time together indoors. That is why it is important to get the flu vaccine, COVID-19 booster, or both, if you are eligible. By getting vaccinated you are boosting your natural immunity and helping to protect yourself and those closest to you this winter.

The flu virus

The flu virus spreads through the air when people cough and sneeze without covering their nose and mouth. Because young children don't always cover their noses or mouths, they can spread the flu virus very quickly, making them 'super-spreaders', so it is important they get the vaccine to help protect them and those around them, including vulnerable members of their family and the wider community.

Each year the strains of flu in circulation change, so new vaccines are formulated to reflect this. That is why it is so important that everyone who falls into an eligible category gets the vaccine annually – if you got it last year, it won't protect you this year. Also, while it won't protect you from COVID-19, it may stop people getting both illnesses and putting strain on our health service.

Everyone eligible for vaccination should make themselves aware of their own GP surgery's flu vaccination arrangements which will have extra measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including restrictions on numbers attending for vaccination and social distancing.

Flu vaccine eligibility

This year the flu vaccination programme has been extended to help reduce the spread of flu and lower flu-related hospital admissions at a time when the health service is under strain as a result of COVID-19.

You are eligible if you are:

- aged 50 or over;
- a child aged 6 months to 2 years or aged between 16 - 49 years with an underlying health condition;
- a child aged 2 up to and including age 16;
- pregnant;
- living in a residential or nursing home;
- a carer for someone – if you care for another person you should get the vaccine so you can continue caring for them;
- a member of staff in an independent care home, hospice or domiciliary care provider;
- a health and social care worker;
- a close contact of someone with lowered immunity

The COVID-19 virus

COVID-19 is a very infectious acute respiratory disease caused by the virus known as coronavirus. Some people get infected and don't notice the symptoms at all, others will have mild symptoms and get better on their own, but for some COVID-19 can be serious or fatal.

The risk of more serious symptoms is higher for older people and those with certain health conditions, however, research shows that vaccinations for COVID-19 are very effective against severe illness and hospitalisation. This is why vaccination against the virus is essential. Even if you have had the primary course (for many this will be two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine) protection will decrease over time. So continue to protect yourself with the COVID-19 booster, if you are eligible.

COVID-19 booster eligibility

The COVID-19 booster vaccine is being offered to help protect those people most at risk from COVID-19. You are eligible for the booster if you are:

- living in a residential care home for older adults;
- frontline health and social care staff;
- aged 40 years or over;
- aged 16-39 years with an underlying health condition that puts them at higher risk of severe COVID-19;
- an adult carer;
- an adult household contact of people with lowered immunity

Winter vaccines public information campaign and resources

Public Health England have developed a campaign to highlight the importance of getting the winter vaccines to boost your immunity if you are eligible and includes TV, radio, outdoor and digital advertising.

The PHA is supporting this work with a tactical campaign featuring messaging reflecting the flu and COVID-19 booster vaccination programmes in Northern Ireland. The PHA campaign will commence in November and will encourage uptake of the free seasonal flu and COVID-19 booster vaccines by all those who are eligible.

The campaign, 'Boost your immunity this winter', highlights the dangers of both viruses and the potential they have to spread during the winter months, and emphasises the importance of getting vaccinated.

A number of resources have been developed to support the campaign. These are available for you to download and share across your communication channels to further promote the importance of getting the winter vaccines.

[Boost your immunity this winter A4 poster](#)

This resource highlights those who are eligible for the vaccines and encourages those to come forward for vaccination.

Download, print and display this resource to encourage uptake of the vaccines.

Also available as an [A3 version](#)

[Boost your immunity this winter with the COVID-19 booster' A4 poster \(for community pharmacies providing the booster vaccine\)](#)

This resource highlights the COVID-19 booster vaccine is available in the pharmacy in which the poster is displayed.

Download, print and display this resource to encourage uptake of the booster vaccine among patients and public.

[COVID-19 vaccine Your guide to booster vaccination leaflet](#)

[What to expect after your COVID-19 vaccination leaflet](#)

This leaflet includes information on the booster, is being printed and distributed to GPs and participating Community Pharmacies.

Social media

[Over 40s 1080x1080 video](#)

Winter vaccine pregnancy videos

[Winter vaccine pregnant 1x1](#)

[Winter vaccine pregnant 9x16](#)

[Winter vaccine pregnant 16x9](#)

Seasonal flu vaccination resources

[Flu is more serious than you think leaflet](#)

[Flu is more serious than you think poster](#)

[School vaccination clinics and COVID-19](#)

[Protect them on the inside too \(children's flu poster\)](#)

[Protecting your child against flu – vaccination for your school child](#)

[Protecting your child against flu – vaccination for your pre-school child](#)

[Flu is more serious than you think: Pregnant women](#)

Animation: Vaccinating children is the first line of defence against flu

Remote video URL

Animation: Flu facts - what you need to know for at risk groups

Remote video URL

Animation: Flu facts - the importance of healthcare workers getting vaccinated

Remote video URL

Health professional advice

Seasonal changes in the flu virus occur and it is for this reason that annual vaccination against flu is recommended in certain groups who are either at risk of the complications of flu or at risk of passing flu unto people at risk of developing complications.

Every year the Chief Medical Officer in Northern Ireland issues a letter outlining who is eligible to receive the flu vaccine under the seasonal influenza programme.

The Health Protection Team of the Public Health Agency develop materials for healthcare workers delivering the seasonal influenza vaccine programme and this includes training slides, a factsheet about seasonal flu vaccines, leaflets posters and guidelines on infection control and data collection.

Downloads

Attachment	Size
PHA WINTER VACCINE 6sh A3.jpg	3.33 MB
PHA WINTER VACCINE 6sh A4.jpg	2.12 MB
PHA WINTER VACCINE 48sh A4.jpg	2.19 MB

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