

# Vaccinations for patients with cancer or blood disorders

## 2025/26

**If you are receiving chemotherapy or steroids, your immune system may be slightly weaker than usual. This may make it harder for your body to fight off infections. Make sure you are up to date with all the vaccines you are eligible for to help protect yourself against preventable infectious diseases.**

### **Flu, COVID-19 and pneumococcal (PPV) vaccines**

You are eligible to receive vaccination against

- seasonal flu
- COVID-19
- pneumococcal infection.



This is because these infections can be a major cause of harm to people with weakened immune systems. Evidence also suggests that getting the flu and COVID-19 viruses at the same time is associated with increased severity of disease compared to those with COVID-19 alone. It is therefore more important than ever to ensure best protection from both infections.

Contact your GP and arrange to have these vaccinations as early as possible. The vaccines cannot cause infection.

**This year the flu vaccine will also be available for household contacts of anyone who is immunocompromised. Your household contacts should ask for the vaccine from their GP.**

- Your vaccines should be given in the week before your next dose of chemotherapy.
- Patients with aplastic anaemia (a rare blood disorder) should not be vaccinated unless recommended by your haematologist.
- Children and young people with a weakened immune system should not receive the nasal vaccine for the flu. You will be offered an alternative vaccine that does not contain the live virus.

## You may also be eligible to receive other vaccines:

### Shingles

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox and it can lead to severe pain and prolonged, serious illness for some people.

You are eligible to receive vaccination against shingles during 2025/26 if you are:

- aged 18 and over on 1 September 2025 AND have a weakened immune system;
- aged 65 or 70 on 1 September 2025.

### RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can lead to inflammation of the lungs, which can be serious for some people. You are eligible to receive vaccination against RSV during 2025/26 if you are:

- aged 75 years on or after 1st September 2025.

**Contact your oncologist or haematologist for advice if you are due to start chemotherapy or immunosuppression drugs.**

For more information on each vaccine,  
visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/vaccines](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/vaccines)  
or scan the QR code:



For information leaflets on each vaccine,  
visit [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications)  
or scan the QR code.



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