

 COVID-19

vaccine

A guide to the spring 2025

COVID-19 vaccination programme

People aged 75 years and older, residents in care homes for older people, and those aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system will be offered a dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine this spring.

Who is being offered a spring vaccine?

COVID-19 is more serious in older people and in people with certain underlying health conditions. For these reasons, people aged 75 years and over, those in care homes for older adults, and those aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system are being offered a spring dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Timing of the spring vaccine

You should be offered an appointment between April and June, with those at highest risk being called in first. You will be invited to have your vaccine around 6 months after your last dose, but you can have it as soon as 3 months.

If you are turning 75 years of age between April and June, you do not have to wait until your birthday, you can attend when you are called for vaccination.

Which vaccine will you be offered?

You will be given a dose of a vaccine made by Pfizer or Moderna and approved in the UK. These vaccines have been updated since the original vaccines and target a different COVID-19 variant. These updated vaccines boost protection well, and give slightly higher levels of antibody against the more recent strains of COVID-19 (Omicron).

As we cannot predict which variants of COVID-19 will be circulating this spring and summer, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have concluded that the same vaccine used in the later weeks of the autumn 2024 programme should be used.

Please accept the vaccination that is offered to you as soon as you are able to – you will be offered the right vaccine for you at the right time.



Who cannot take up the offer of a spring vaccine

There are very few eligible people who should not have a dose this spring. If you have had a severe reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine you should discuss this with your doctor.

Side effects

Common side effects: As with your previous dose, the common side effects are the same for all COVID-19 vaccines, including the updated vaccines being used this spring and include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection – this tends to be worst around 1 to 2 days after the vaccine
- feeling tired
- headache
- general aches or mild flu-like symptoms

You can rest and take paracetamol (follow the dose advice in the packaging) to help you feel better.

Side effects following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, contact your GP practice or out of hours service for advice.

You can also report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines. Please see the contact information for the scheme on the back of this leaflet.

Serious side effects: Cases of inflammation of the heart (called myocarditis or pericarditis) have been reported very rarely after both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. These cases have been seen mostly in younger men and within several days of vaccination. Most of the people affected have felt better and recovered quickly following rest and simple treatments. You should seek medical advice urgently from your doctor or Emergency Department if, after vaccination, you experience:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart

If you had a serious side effect after a previous dose you may be advised to avoid or delay further vaccination. You should discuss this with your doctor or specialist. Please see the back page of the leaflet on how to report side effects.

What should you do if you are not well on the day of your appointment?

If you are unwell, wait until you have recovered to have your vaccine. You should not attend an appointment if you have a fever or think you might be infectious to others.

Can you still catch COVID-19 after having the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine will reduce the chance of you becoming severely unwell from COVID-19 this spring and summer. It may take a few days for your body to build up some extra protection from the dose. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but any infection should be less severe.

If you have not had all your vaccinations

If you are eligible but have not been vaccinated before or have missed a previous dose, you should still have one dose this spring. Most people do not need extra doses to make up for those they have missed. If you have a severely weakened immune system your doctor may advise an extra dose three months after you have the spring vaccine.

Will I have to wait after my vaccine?

If you have a history of allergies, or if you had a reaction immediately after a previous dose, you may be advised to stay for 15 minutes after the vaccine. Please make sure you tell the vaccinator.



Further information

You can read the information leaflet for after vaccination and other previously issued information leaflets on the PHA website:

www.pha.site/covid19infomaterials

COVID-19 What to expect after vaccination

A guide on COVID-19 vaccine for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding

COVID-19 vaccinations – a guide for people with a weakened immune system

Read the product information leaflets for UK recipients of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, including ingredients and possible side effects.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-safety

You will be invited for your vaccination by your GP. Alternatively, you can attend a local community pharmacy or Trust vaccination clinic for your vaccine.

If you need more information on COVID-19 vaccination, please visit:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine

Information correct at time of publication. For the latest version of this leaflet and alternative formats visit the PHA website www.publichealth.hscni.net

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You can also report suspected side effects on the Yellow Card website or by calling 0800 731 6789 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) or by downloading the Yellow Card app

www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard



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