

Spring 2025

COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

Who can get a free NHS spring COVID-19 vaccine?

You may be eligible if you are:

- aged 75 years or over (by 17 June 2025)
- aged 6 months or over and have a weakened immune system
- a resident in a care home for older adults.

It's recommended that you get a spring COVID-19 vaccine 6 months after your last dose. It must be at least 3 months (91 days) since your last COVID-19 vaccination. You can get your spring COVID-19 vaccination regardless of your previous vaccination history.

Household contacts of people with a weakened immune system are not eligible.

Who has a weakened immune system?

You may have a weakened immune system if you:

- have or had blood cancer (leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- had an organ, bone marrow or stem cell transplant
- have HIV
- have a genetic disorder affecting your immune system
- are having or recently had chemotherapy, biological therapy or radiotherapy
- take steroid medicines, depending on your dosage
- are having immunosuppressive treatment.

This list is a summary and does not cover everything. Speak to your pharmacist, GP surgery or specialist if you are not sure.

I am under the age of 75. Do I need to bring anything to my appointment?

The healthcare professional at your appointment will need to confirm you still have a weakened immune system before you get the vaccine.

At your appointment, it will help if you can:

- show your health record or medication history in the NHS App, OR
- bring a repeat prescription or medicine box, OR
- bring an NHS letter confirming your diagnosis.

If your health status has changed and you no longer have a weakened immune system, you may not need the vaccine.

Can I get an NHS COVID-19 vaccine for travel or other purposes?

If you are not in an eligible group, it is not currently possible to access COVID-19 vaccination for free on the NHS.

Can I buy a COVID-19 vaccine?

People aged 12 and over who are not eligible for a free vaccine on the NHS can buy a COVID-19 vaccine, similar to the flu vaccine. It is extremely unlikely that healthier/younger individuals will experience serious illness if they catch COVID-19.

You do not need to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine if you are in an eligible group for a seasonal vaccination this spring. This includes all residents in a care home for adults, those aged 75 and over (by 17 June 2025) and those with a weakened immune system.

Invitation for Vaccination

How will I be invited?

If you're eligible, you may receive a letter, text, email or NHS App message from NHS England. You may also be invited by local NHS services, such as your GP surgery.

How do you identify who to invite?

The government decide which groups will be eligible for free vaccines on the NHS. Their decision is based on the independent advice of clinical experts in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) who review the latest clinical evidence and data. NHS England then uses GP surgery and hospital records to invite people who may be eligible for a vaccination.

I don't think I'm eligible. Why have I received an invitation?

If you are under 75, you may have been identified as potentially having a weakened immune system. Speak to your pharmacist, GP surgery or specialist if you are not sure.

I've already been vaccinated (on the NHS or privately) or arranged my vaccination appointment. Why have I been invited again?

It can sometimes take a while for your record to be updated. Please ignore the invite – there is nothing you need to do. If you were vaccinated privately, you will still get NHS invitations if you are

eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccination on the NHS. This is because we cannot access data on private vaccinations. Please ignore these invites.

Why has the NHS sent me more than one invitation?

We make sure that we are catering for as many accessibility needs as possible by sending invitations in multiple formats, including the NHS App, SMS, email and letter, where possible. We periodically send reminders if someone does not book an appointment or get vaccinated. Some GP practices send their own invitations. Our national invites supplement these where they do happen. If someone has already made a booking with a local service, we try to exclude them from receiving further national invitations. I was sent an invitation for someone else. What should I do?

For letters only: If you get a letter for someone who doesn't live at your address, please do not open it. Tick the return to sender box or write 'return to sender' on the envelope, then put the envelope into a letterbox. You don't need to add a stamp.

For all invites: If you would like this to be investigated so it doesn't happen again, you can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre. You may get further invitations while we investigate the issue. We apologise for this.

Why have I been sent an invitation for someone who is deceased?

Sometimes information on medical records has not been updated. You can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre and they will look into what has happened to improve our processes. You may get further invitations while we investigate the issue. We sincerely apologise for any upset caused by this.

Vaccination Appointments

Can I book an appointment for 2 people?

We can book 2 separate appointments for you. It's not currently possible to make a single booking for 2 people.

I can't find a convenient appointment. What should I do?

More appointments get added every day, so continue to check back. Alternatively, you can go to a COVID-19 walk-in site instead. Find your nearest at www.nhs.uk/covid-walk-in.

Will I have to wait after my vaccine?

Most people will not be asked to wait. 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 healthcare professional at your appointment.

What adjustments are available to support people with additional needs attending vaccination appointments?

If you have any access needs (e.g. step-free or wheelchair access), we can try and help you find a suitable vaccination site. If you need any other reasonable adjustments at your appointment, please let a member of staff know on arrival. We are unable to arrange reasonable adjustments in advance so make sure you tell staff what your additional needs are on the day. Staff will try to meet your needs wherever possible. You can also bring someone who can support you, like a family member or your carer.

Advice for Getting Vaccinated

Can I get vaccinated if I feel unwell, or if I've recently had COVID-19 or symptoms?

Wait until you've recovered to have your vaccine, but you should try to have it as soon as possible. You should not attend an appointment if you have a fever or think you might be infectious to others. If you have recently recovered, there is no need to delay getting vaccinated.

Can I get vaccinated if I'm taking antibiotics?

Yes, there is no interaction between antibiotics and COVID-19 vaccines. You should only delay vaccination if you currently have a bad fever or 'febrile' illness, such as the rapid onset of headaches, chills or muscle and joint pains. A cold or low-grade fever are not reasons to postpone getting the vaccine. If you have any concerns, speak to the healthcare professional at your appointment.

I can't take injections in my arm. Should I still get vaccinated?

Yes, you should still book an appointment. Tell the healthcare professional at your appointment and they can discuss your options with you.

I'm undergoing treatment. Should I have a vaccination?

Your specialist or GP will be able to advise you on the best time to have the vaccination around your planned treatment.

Should I get the vaccine if I have long COVID?

Yes. The MHRA has advised that getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had COVID-19 as it is for those who haven't, including those who have mild residual symptoms. If you have significant ongoing complications, speak to your specialist or GP.

Can I get vaccinated if I've had cosmetic procedures?

Yes, health risks associated with the COVID virus outweigh the current known associated risks of vaccination. There is no specific interval specified between vaccination and cosmetic procedures. Swelling of the face in patients who have had facial cosmetic injections is a rare side effect included in the COVID-19 Moderna patient information leaflet. If facial swelling occurs after vaccination, please report it through the Yellow Card scheme.

Can I give blood after having my vaccine?

Waiting 7 days is recommended to ensure donor and donation safety. It also reduces the risk of a donation being discarded if you developed side effects around the time you donated blood. You can donate again provided you are fully recovered from any side effects.

I'm on a blood thinner. Can I still be vaccinated?

If you normally have vaccinations without difficulty, then COVID vaccines should present no additional problems. If you have any concerns, you can discuss these with the healthcare professional at your appointment.

I've had a stem cell transplant or CAR-T therapy. Do I need to be revaccinated against COVID-19?

Yes, if you've had a stem cell transplant or CAR-T therapy, you should be offered COVID-19 revaccination as your protection from previous vaccines may be lost. Your specialist or GP should refer you, regardless of the time of year. Your specialist or GP should also complete a template form advising on the best time for you to start your vaccination/s. They will tell you about other routine vaccinations you will need, and any other seasonal vaccinations you may be eligible for.

I've had a stem cell transplant or CAR-T therapy. How can I arrange my re-vaccinations?

Your GP surgery or specialist should refer you for the vaccinations you need.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

I need information in another format. Where can I get this?

Other formats of your spring COVID-19 invitation are available. For easy read, audio, BSL and translations, go to www.england.nhs.uk/seasonal-invites.

Can the NHS support me with transport arrangements for my vaccination?

Some people are eligible for free non-emergency patient transport services (PTS). PTS may not be available in all areas. To find out if you're eligible for PTS and how to access it, you'll need to speak to your GP or the healthcare professional who referred you for vaccination.

Can I choose which vaccine I have?

You cannot choose which vaccine you have. If you have queries about vaccine types, you can discuss these with the healthcare professional at your appointment. For the latest information, go to www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination.

Which COVID-19 vaccine will I get?

You will be given a vaccine made by Moderna or Pfizer. You should accept the vaccine offered to you. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) concluded that both vaccines can be used in adults. COVID-19 vaccines in use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. Some people are only offered certain vaccines, for example if you're under 18 years old. Children under 12 years old will be given smaller doses than older children and adults.

Will I need the same type of COVID-19 vaccine as I had before?

No, all COVID-19 vaccines authorised for use by the NHS are effective and provide a strong booster response. If you have any concerns, you can discuss these with the healthcare professional at your appointment.

Do the vaccines contain animal products?

Vaccine types offered by the NHS this spring do not contain animal products, including egg.

For the latest information about COVID-19 vaccine types, including their ingredients, go to www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination. You can read the UKHSA animal products and vaccines leaflet at www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-human-and-animal-products-in-vaccines.

Is vaccination safe?

As with any medicine, COVID-19 vaccines are highly regulated products. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the official UK regulator, is globally recognised for requiring the highest standards of safety, quality and effectiveness for medicines and vaccines. There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process. Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. COVID-19 vaccines are being continuously monitored for safety – the benefits of the vaccines far outweigh any risk in most people. If you have any concerns, you can speak to the healthcare professional at your vaccination appointment.

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

COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you becoming severely unwell from COVID-19. 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, but any infection should be less severe.

Have the vaccines been tested on animals?

Laws and regulatory agencies worldwide currently require that all medicines are tested on animals before clinical trials on humans.

How well do the COVID-19 vaccines work?

All vaccines are classed as highly effective. If you are at increased risk of severe COVID-19, it's important you get the additional protection you need. Research has shown COVID vaccines have helped to reduce the risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19 and protect against different strains (variants) of COVID-19. There is a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have a vaccine, so it's important to follow advice about how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies to protect you from diseases. It's usually much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by infection. Once your immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can often protect you.

Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Can I have an alternative (non-mRNA) vaccine instead?

There is no alternative to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines available through the NHS this spring. Where there is a greater risk of severe allergy, NHS vaccination services may offer vaccination under appropriately enhanced clinical supervision.

COVID-19 Vaccination Side Effects

Are there any side effects from COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines have a good safety record. Most side effects are mild and only last for a day or so, such as:

- A sore arm from the injection
- Feeling tired
- A headache
- General aches, or mild flu-like symptoms

You can rest and take paracetamol 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, you can call NHS 111 or use textphone 18001 111.

I'm experiencing serious side effects (or a serious allergic reaction). What should I do?

Seek medical advice urgently if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath or feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart. I can transfer you to 999 if life is at risk.

How can I report side effects?

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card Scheme:

- online at Yellow Card Scheme or by downloading and using the Yellow Card app on Apple or Android
- by calling the Yellow Card scheme on 0800 731 6789

Is there anyone that shouldn't get the vaccine?

There are very few eligible people who cannot have the vaccine. If you have had allergic reactions following COVID-19 vaccinations in the past, tell the healthcare professional about this at your appointment.

What should I do if I've had a common allergic reaction after vaccination previously?

Please make sure you tell the healthcare professional at your appointment. They'll help you to manage any allergies or side effects. Some people experience mild or common allergies following vaccination but have safely had a vaccine before. This includes having a rash, swelling, wheezing or hives. If you've had any of these mild or common allergies, you can continue to have your vaccine.

What should I do if I've had a severe allergic reaction after vaccination previously?

Please make sure you tell the healthcare professional at your appointment. Some people who have severe allergic reactions to certain COVID-19 (mRNA) vaccines may be referred to an allergy specialist. This will only be in rare cases, for example, if you have a history of anaphylaxis

or systemic allergic reactions. An expert allergist or other appropriate specialist will then assess your risk. If suitable, they may advise you to get vaccinated in hospital for additional observation and monitoring.

I need to be vaccinated in a specialist setting. How can I arrange this?

Your GP surgery or vaccination centre should refer you for further assessment if this is appropriate for you.

Pregnancy and fertility

Does the vaccine affect fertility?

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility.

Can I get vaccinated if I'm breastfeeding?

Yes, you can have the COVID-19 vaccine if you're breastfeeding. You can also contact your maternity service or GP surgery for advice.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine while I'm pregnant?

Yes, if you are eligible for a spring COVID-19 vaccination. If you have any concerns, speak to the healthcare professional at your appointment. You can also contact your maternity service or GP surgery for advice about vaccinations during pregnancy.

Should I avoid pregnancy after vaccination?

You do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination. The vaccine cannot give you or your baby COVID-19.

Vaccination Records

How can I check my vaccination record?

You can check your record using the NHS App or online at www.coronavirus-record.service.nhs.uk.

Why is my vaccine record wrong or missing information?

Your COVID-19 vaccine record could be wrong or missing information because:

- your last dose of the vaccine was given in the last 5 working days and your record has not yet been updated
- you were vaccinated outside of England – this service is for people who have been vaccinated in England
- you had your vaccination as part of a clinical trial
- you had a private vaccination rather than an NHS vaccination.

How can I get my COVID pass?

There are no longer any domestic requirements to demonstrate your vaccination status and the NHS COVID Pass is no longer required to travel abroad to any countries. If you need to view your vaccination history, use the NHS App or ask your GP surgery. If you do not have the NHS App but know your NHS number, you can use this link to check your vaccination record: www.coronavirus-record.service.nhs.uk.

How can I get my record updated if I had vaccinations outside of England?

The NHS does not need evidence of COVID-19 vaccinations you've had outside of England. You should be invited for vaccinations you are eligible for. If you need proof for work or travel, you can use the original documents from the country that provided the vaccination.

Will my records show a private COVID-19 vaccination?

The NHS cannot routinely keep records of privately accessed healthcare, including COVID-19 vaccinations. We do not have access to this data. If you choose to inform your GP, they may be able to add a note to your GP health record but your COVID-19 vaccination history will not be updated in the NHS App. If you would like evidence that you had a private COVID-19 vaccination, please contact the provider.

Will my consent be sought for my child to get vaccinated?

Consent is an important part of vaccination. At the appointment, you and your child will be given the opportunity to ask questions. You can view a consent form online to help your discussion at www.bit.ly/CYP-COVID-consent. Consent will normally be obtained on the day. It is not necessary to print and sign the form in advance. So that we can get your consent more easily, we strongly advise you to accompany your child to the appointment.

Can my child be vaccinated without my consent?

Your child may have the right to get vaccinated without your consent. These are very unusual circumstances and are based on an individual assessment. This can only be determined by the healthcare professional at the time. We would prefer you to come to a joint decision with your child. Further information on consent is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/children.

COVID-19 Testing

Am I eligible for COVID-19 rapid lateral flow tests?

You can no longer order free rapid lateral flow or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests from the NHS online.

You may still be able to get free COVID-19 rapid lateral flow tests from your local pharmacy if you're eligible for COVID-19 treatments.

How can I contact NHS Test and Trace?

NHS Test and Trace is no longer available; however, you can find information about COVID-19, make a complaint or report a problem with a test kit at: [Get help with coronavirus \(COVID-19\) enquiries and complaints \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](https://www.test-and-trace.nhs.uk).