



UK Health  
Security  
Agency



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



# When can I get my flu vaccine?

## Flu vaccination winter 2021 to 2022

People who are most at risk from the complications of flu are recommended to get a flu vaccine every year. This winter it is especially important with flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) both in circulation. Research shows that if you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time you may be more seriously ill. You don't need to wait to be invited to have your vaccine, if you are eligible you can make an appointment at your GP surgery or ask any pharmacy that provides the NHS service.

### Who is eligible for a flu vaccine?

You can get a free flu vaccine if you are: aged 50 years old and over (including those aged 50 by 31 March 2022); have certain health conditions; live with someone who is immunocompromised; are pregnant; or receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer of an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick.

Children aged 2 and 3 years old on the 31 August 2021 and school-aged child from Reception up to Year 11 are also eligible for the flu vaccine.

You can get the flu vaccine at your GP surgery or a pharmacy, if you're a health or social care worker employed by a:

- registered residential care or nursing home
- registered homecare organisation
- hospice

Or if you provide health or social care through direct payments or personal health budgets.

Visit [www.nhs.uk/flujab](http://www.nhs.uk/flujab) to check whether you are eligible.

### I am in one of the listed groups.

#### When can I get my flu vaccine?

Flu vaccine is delivered to GP practices, pharmacies and other services in batches in the run up to and over the flu season. Clinic appointments are scheduled around these staggered deliveries which means that not everyone can get vaccinated straight away and sometimes appointments need to be rearranged if delivery schedules of vaccine change.

Overall there is enough flu vaccine for everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated. If you haven't been able to get your vaccination yet, you will still be able to have it before flu starts to circulate.

#### Can I go elsewhere if my GP practice or pharmacy has run out?

If you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, you may get it either from your own GP practice or any pharmacy offering NHS flu vaccinations. They should be able to tell you when they expect to be able to offer you a vaccine. As supply of vaccine may vary between services, if your GP or pharmacy don't have vaccine immediately

available when you contact them, you can contact other pharmacies to see if they can vaccinate you instead.

Pregnant women can ask their maternity provider for the free flu vaccine and some of those visiting hospitals, either as in- or out-patients may also be offered the flu vaccine there.

### What about my child?

Pharmacies don't provide vaccines to anyone under 18 years old. If your child was 2 or 3 years old on the 31 August 2021, contact their GP surgery to arrange an appointment. Children with underlying health conditions can also get the vaccine from their GP surgery (from the age of 6 months old). However, if your child is in one of the eligible school-aged groups (Reception to Year 11), they will receive an invitation to have it at school alongside everyone else in their class. But you can ask for your child to have it at their GP surgery if they have an underlying health condition and this is what you prefer.

### Why are some people still being offered the vaccine and not others?

There are several types of flu vaccines available. You will be offered one that is recommended for you based on your age. This means some people will be offered a flu vaccine that is in stock while others, who need a different type of vaccine, may have to wait until that vaccine becomes available, but this will be before the flu virus begins to circulate.

### Wouldn't it be better to have any type of flu vaccine rather than wait?

Providers of flu vaccination services are required to offer the vaccine that is most effective for you. It is better to wait to get the right vaccine so that you get the most benefit from it.

### When do you need to have a flu vaccination for it to offer protection?

It is best to have the vaccine before flu starts to circulate, which is usually from December onwards. But if you have the vaccine later than this, it is still worth having.

### I am eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccine. Should I wait to have my flu jab so I can have it at the same time?

For most people who are eligible for both the flu jab and COVID-19 booster, they will have to attend two appointments. It is important that you do not delay your flu jab in the expectation that you can have it alongside the COVID-19 booster. You need to have your flu jab before flu starts to circulate. If you are offered both vaccines at the same appointment it will save you having to attend a second time. It is safe to have them both together.

### What should I do now?

Some people may receive an invitation to come forward for a vaccination from their GP surgery or by a national letter. However, you do not have to wait to be invited before booking an appointment at your GP or pharmacy. If you are eligible for a flu vaccine but can't have the flu vaccine now because you have been advised that the best vaccine for you is not currently available, please follow the advice from your GP surgery or pharmacy and remember to book in an appointment at the next opportunity.

