

# Protect yourself and the people you care for

15 December 2021

This winter, the NHS is preparing for a bad flu season alongside rising cases of COVID-19, which is why taking up any offer of flu or COVID-19 booster vaccines is so important.

Vaccines are the best protection for you and for those you care about from these deadly viruses. See below for information on how to book yours.



**Here are some common questions and concerns about the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Find the answers to these on the next page.**

*How can I book the flu vaccine?*

*How can I book the COVID-19 vaccine or booster?*

*Why do I need vaccinating against COVID-19 and flu?*

*Do I even need a flu jab and COVID booster after having both my vaccines?*

*It doesn't feel right for me to have a COVID-19 booster when large parts of the world have not even had a first dose.*

*I'm not in a vulnerable group so I don't need the flu vaccine.*

*I'm concerned about the effects of the COVID-19 vaccine on my fertility and baby's health.*

*Lots of people I know don't trust the vaccines.*

*I'm concerned about the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.*

## ***How can I book the flu vaccine?***

The local NHS is seeing high demand for the flu vaccine this year and the supply of flu vaccine stocks in GP surgeries and community pharmacies fluctuates week by week.

There is enough flu vaccine for everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated, and appointments to get the flu jab are available to book.

If you've tried previously and not been able to get an appointment, please do keep trying as more appointments will become available as vaccine supplies are restocked.

You can book a flu vaccination by either:

Contacting your GP practice and booking an appointment at one of their scheduled flu clinics

**Or**

Attending a local community pharmacy that offers flu vaccinations.

**[Click here to find a local pharmacy that offers the NHS flu vaccine](#)**

## ***How can I book the COVID-19 vaccine or booster?***

### **First and second doses**

If you have not had your first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you can attend a walk-in clinic to get those doses.

Search for your nearest walk-in clinic here:

**[www.apps.norfolk.gov.uk/WalkIn/Form/Index](http://www.apps.norfolk.gov.uk/WalkIn/Form/Index)**

### **Boosters**

To manage the immediate and rapid increase in demand for boosters in response to the Omicron variant, and to manage the flow of patients through local vaccination sites safely, the local health and care system encourages everyone to book an appointment for their booster.

### **Make an appointment for a booster by:**

Using the NHS national booking service online at [nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](https://nhs.uk/covid-vaccination) or call 119 (free), between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

### **Finding appointments near you**

Appointments on the National Booking System become available in line with vaccine supply and the availability of vaccinators, so do keep checking the portal as additional appointments are added on a regular basis.

If there are no appointments in your local area, do keep trying as appointments are added throughout the day.



## ***Why do I need vaccinating against COVID-19 AND Flu?***

Flu and COVID-19 are caused by different viruses, so a vaccination for one will not protect you against the other. It is important to have both your flu vaccine and to get your COVID-19 booster.

Whilst there has been a lot of focus recently on COVID-19, do not underestimate how dangerous the flu virus is.

Flu can cause severe illness and even death among vulnerable groups. It can lead to complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia. In an average year over 11,000 people in England die from flu.

And if you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, you're more likely to become seriously ill.

Even if you don't think you are high risk of getting ill yourself, you may be caring for others who are. Vaccination can help to reduce the spread of viruses, so getting yours done for COVID-19 and flu is the best way to protect those around you.



## ***Do I even need a flu jab and COVID booster after having both my vaccines?***

Even if you've had both your first and second doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, the booster is important as it improves the protection from your first two doses. This is important to protect you, your colleagues, and the people you care about.

This winter we are preparing for a bad flu season alongside rising cases of COVID-19. This is because fewer people will have built up natural immunity to flu during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New flu vaccines are produced every year to protect against the strains most likely to be in circulation, which is why you need to get vaccinated every year.

While four jabs may feel like a lot, it's important to have the right number of jabs at the right time to provide the protection you need from these viruses.

## ***It doesn't feel right for me to have my COVID-19 booster when large parts of the world have not even had a first dose.***

COVID-19 is a global problem and vaccines are our best route out of the pandemic. The UK has announced it will donate 100 million vaccine doses to developing countries, through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access facility (Covax), within the next year.

The best way that you can help others is by being fully vaccinated yourself. This reduces the risk of you catching or spreading the virus to other people and the chances of you becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.

By getting your vaccines, you are helping to protect everyone around you, and you are helping to protect our health and care system.



### ***I'm not in a vulnerable group so I don't need the flu vaccine.***

Even if you are fit and healthy you can still catch the flu virus and pass it on to others who are vulnerable.

Flu vaccination for all staff that are directly working with people who are clinically vulnerable to flu is especially important this winter.

Flu can cause lots of sickness among staff groups, so getting vaccinated helps to protect the whole workforce.

### ***I'm concerned about the effects of the winter vaccines on my fertility and /or my baby's health.***

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, it's natural to be cautious about what you put into your body.

Catching COVID-19 or Flu during pregnancy can cause serious complications for mum and baby, especially in the last few months of pregnancy. The vaccines for both diseases are safe in pregnancy and offer pregnant women the best protection against becoming seriously ill. The NHS recommends that all pregnant women have the flu vaccine, whatever stage of pregnancy they are at.

### **There is no evidence that vaccines for either illness impact on fertility.**

Find out more about COVID-19 vaccine and pregnancy / fertility at [www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/](http://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/)

### ***Lots of people I know don't trust the vaccines.***

Most of us talk to other people about the vaccines. However, when you are making decisions about health and medicines, always use information from reliable sources.

The best health advice in England is on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/why-vaccination-is-safe-and-important/>

Information about vaccinations and other health issues is available in non-English languages at [www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/translated-health-information/](http://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/translated-health-information/)

### ***I'm concerned about the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.***

The Covid-19 vaccines have been tested on tens of thousands of people and assessed by experts.

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects, but not everyone gets them. Most side effects are mild and don't last long. These can include:

- a sore arm where the needle went in
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy

You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, to prevent and relieve any symptoms. If your symptoms get worse or you are worried, visit [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk) or call 111.

Serious side effects are very rare.

More information on possible side effects can be found [here](#).

