

COVID-19 Booster Vaccine Factsheet

(Correct as of 29 October 2021– for the latest information on COVID-19 visit <https://northcentrallondonccg.nhs.uk/my-health/covid-19/>)

Who is being offered the Covid booster vaccine?

COVID-19 booster vaccinations are being offered to people most at risk from COVID-19. This includes anyone aged 50 and over, people aged 16 and over with a health condition that puts them at high risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 (and their main carers), and people aged 16 and over who live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis). Frontline health and social care workers are also eligible for the booster vaccine.

If I'm eligible, when will I be offered my booster jab?

Boosters are available for those who have already had their first two Covid jabs, where at least six months have passed since the second jab.

What type of COVID-19 vaccine will I be offered as a booster?

The vaccine you will be offered as a booster will probably be different from the vaccine you were given for your first two jabs. So if you've had the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine already you will be offered Pfizer and if you've had Pfizer already you will be offered Moderna. There may be a small number of people who cannot have the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, in which case they will be offered a booster dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are being offered because there is good evidence that these vaccines provide the strongest immune response, including for people who received the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine for their first and second doses.

Is it OK to mix and match vaccines?

Yes, it is OK to mix vaccines. Ongoing studies have shown that mixing vaccines is safe and might even provide a better and more long-lasting immune response in the long-term.

Is there an optimal time to get the Covid booster vaccination?

Yes there is an optimal time. You need to wait six months after your second vaccination. The optimal time is an eight-week period after six months has passed.

Can I have the COVID-19 booster vaccine if I'm pregnant?

Yes. If you are pregnant and in one of the groups that has been recommended for the boosters, you are eligible to receive a booster. Again, you need to wait six months after your second vaccination before you will be offered a booster.

Why do I need a booster when I have already had two Covid vaccinations?

Our immune system is very complex. It is difficult to predict how the immune system will respond to vaccines, especially over longer time periods. For vaccines that have been established for decades, some require one dose only, others require a course of several vaccines over a period of time, and others (flu for example) require an annual vaccine. No vaccine offers 100% protection against infection. The immunity granted from some established vaccines (tetanus for example) does wane over time, meaning that boosters are needed.

With the Covid vaccination programme, for people who had their second dose more than six months ago, scientists have seen that protection against getting infected with COVID-19 has decreased slightly. The protection against severe disease, hospitalisation and death is still very good though. But it does mean that there are increasing numbers of mild Covid infection.

There is good evidence (from other countries like Israel that started using boosters earlier) that the booster dose gives a really good increase in protection against infection and has driven down case numbers.

After we have been using the COVID-19 vaccines for a longer period of time, a clearer picture on what constitutes a complete course and the dosing schedule will emerge. It may be that three doses over the course of six months is best, or it may be that a booster is needed annually, like the flu vaccine. We do not know the answer to this just yet.

How will I be contacted when it's time for my booster?

All patients will be contacted by their GP to attend a local GP site as they become eligible. A text message based booking system is being used for those that have mobiles. Calls will still be made to those with no mobile and those who don't respond to the text.

Can I get my booster from a pharmacy instead?

Yes, you can attend one of the 11 pharmacy sites in Islington. You can book your booster at a pharmacy site using the National Booking System (as long as you're eligible). If you have not been contacted by your GP and it's been six months and one week (190 days) since your second dose, please try to book your appointment using the National Booking System.

How do I access the National Booking System?

You can access it online here - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

If you cannot use the NHS National Booking System website, you can phone 119 free of charge.

Are there any walk-in services?

Yes there are. Selected vaccination centres are offering walk-in boosters, with no appointment needed. At the time of writing walk in clinics are available at the following locations:

- King Square Community Centre, Blackwell House, Pankhurst Terrace, EC1V 8DY
- West Library, 107 Bridgeman Road, N1 1BD

This list of [walk-in clinics](#) is updated daily. Please do not attend a walk-in clinic or book a vaccination slot unless it has been at least six months since your second dose of the vaccine.

People have reported ongoing side effects from the vaccine. If they are offered the same vaccination for the booster what can they do?

The booster you are offered will probably be different from the vaccine you have been given for your first two jabs. So if you have had Oxford/AstraZeneca already you will be offered Pfizer and if you have had Pfizer already you will be offered Moderna. You should have a conversation with your GP if you have concerns.

Which GP sites are providing Covid boosters in Islington?

1. Partnership Primary Care, 331 Camden Road, N7 0SL
2. Ritchie Street Group Practice, 34 Ritchie Street, N1 0DG
3. Clerkenwell Medical Practice, Finsbury Health Centre, Pine Street, EC1R 0LP
4. Pine Street Medical Practice, Finsbury Health Centre, Pine Street, EC1R 0LP
5. Amwell Group Practice, 4 Naoroji Street, WC1X 0GB
6. Goodinge Group Practice, 20 North Road, N7 9EW
7. Mildmay Medical Practice, 2A Green Lanes, Newington Green, N16 9NF
8. Killick Street Health Centre, 75 Killick Street, N1 9RH
9. Barnsbury Medical Practice, 8 Bingfield Street, N1 0AL

Do I need to bring anything with me to the vaccination site?

As well as a face covering (if you are able to wear one), you may wish to bring some form of ID to the centre. Bring your booking reference number if you have an appointment.

If you need a carer you can bring them with you on the day.

What if I am housebound?

If you are housebound a home visit will be arranged for your booster via your GP.

Can I have a home visit if my immune system is weakened?

Only those who are registered as housebound will get a home visit and this is based solely on mobility. Residents with weakened immune systems are able to go to the GP sites.

How is the booster recorded on the phone app/ in my notes?

Any booster will be recorded on the NHS system so there is a record of it. It usually takes a few days before it appears on the App. It may appear under MEDICATIONS rather than IMMUNISATIONS.

Can I have my Covid booster at the same time as my Flu jab?

Yes. You can have these jabs at the same time or you can have two separate appointments, as you prefer.

I've had a letter asking me to go for a third vaccination rather than a booster. Is this just a different wording or is a third vaccination something else?

No it is not the same thing. Some vulnerable patients, for example those who have weakened immune systems, need three vaccinations to reach the same baseline of protection as other patients. Six months after you have your third injection you will be invited for your booster vaccination in the same way as other patients.

Should I attend my booster appointment if I have Covid symptoms, or if someone in my household has symptoms?

No. If you, or anyone in your household has symptoms, you should not go for your vaccination. If you have to self-isolate, you should not go for your vaccination.

What protection is available if you are unable to have the vaccination?

If you're unable to have the vaccination it's important to go back to the basics. We're hoping to increase herd immunity in the population. Respect social distancing guidelines, wear a mask, use hand gel and wash your hands. These are the mainstays of protection for all of us. Even with a booster vaccination protection is never 100%.

What about boosting your own immunity? Does that work?

There's a good amount of evidence that weight gain is a risk factor associated with more severe cases of Covid. So try and maintain a healthy weight and keep a baseline of fitness as well as you are able.

More information

- <https://northcentrallondonccg.nhs.uk/my-health/covid-19/>
- [Vaccine Knowledge Project](#)
- [Product information leaflet for vaccine from PfizerBioNTech](#)
- [Product information leaflet for vaccine from OxfordAstraZeneca](#)
- [Information on vaccine from Moderna](#)