The
COVID-19
vaccine

booster

Important information
about your booster vaccine

NHS
SCOTLAND

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What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a very infectious respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. COVID-19 is more serious in older people and those with certain health conditions.
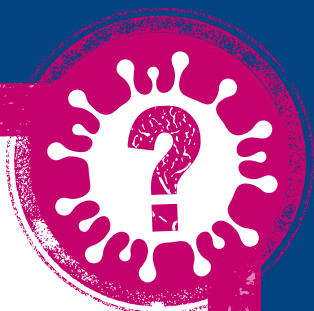
COVID-19 spreads through the air when people cough or sneeze, or when they touch surfaces where it has landed then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

The common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature (37.8°C or above)
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

It is also possible to have COVID-19 without showing any symptoms. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should self-isolate and get a test.

COVID-19 can affect anyone. It can cause serious illness, hospitalisation and even death.

For more information about COVID-19 visit **www.nhsinform.scot/covid19**

Who is being offered a booster dose?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends that the booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is offered to:

- those living in residential care homes for older adults
- frontline health and social care workers
- all adults aged 50 years or over
- adults aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19
- adult carers (aged 16 or over)
- household contacts (aged 16 or over) of immunosuppressed individuals.

Why am I being offered a booster dose?

Like some other vaccines, levels of protection may begin to reduce over time. The booster dose will help extend the protection you gained from your first two doses and give you longer-term protection.

The booster dose will help reduce the risk of you needing to go to hospital due to COVID-19 this winter.

When should I have my booster dose?

The booster dose can be offered any time **at least six months after your second dose.**

Which vaccine will I be offered?

You will be offered a booster dose of either Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.*

Like your previous doses, the vaccine will be given in your upper arm.

How do I get my booster dose?

For more information on how to get your booster dose visit **www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccinebooster**

What if I've missed my first or second dose?

If you have not had either your first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you should arrange to have them as soon as possible.

You will still need the booster dose, but the timing of it will depend on when you had your first two doses.

For further information about the COVID-19 vaccine:

🌐 visit **www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine**

📞 call **0800 030 8013**
(available 8am–8pm, 7 days a week).

* AstraZeneca may be given as your booster dose if you have medical reasons that mean you cannot have Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna.

What are the side effects?

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. It's normal to experience side effects after the vaccine. It shows the vaccine is teaching your body's immune system how to protect itself from the disease. However, not everyone gets them. Most side effects are mild and short term.

Very common side effects in the first day or two include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection
- headache, aches and chills
- nausea
- mild flu-like symptoms.

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

An uncommon side effect is swollen glands in the armpit or neck on the same side as the arm where you had the vaccine. This can last for around 10 days, but if it lasts longer see your doctor. If you are due for breast screening (a mammogram) in the few weeks after the vaccine, then you should mention you've had the COVID-19 vaccine when you attend.

If you had serious side effects after any previous dose, you may be advised to avoid or delay further vaccination. You should discuss this with your doctor or specialist.

Fever after the vaccine

It's quite common to develop a fever (temperature above 37.8°C) after vaccination. This normally happens within 48 hours of the vaccination and usually goes away within 48 hours.

You do not need to self-isolate or book a COVID-19 test unless you have other COVID-19 symptoms or if you have been advised to by:

- NHS Test and Protect
- your Occupational Health team
- a Public Health Protection team.

If the fever starts more than 48 hours after the vaccination or lasts longer than 48 hours, you should self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test. This can be done at **www.nhsinform.scot/testing**

Are there other, more serious side effects?

Heart inflammation

Worldwide, there have also been recent, rare cases of inflammation of the heart called myocarditis or pericarditis reported after COVID-19 vaccines, although it is not yet clear that these are caused by the vaccines.

These cases have been seen mostly in younger men within several days of vaccination. Most of these people recovered and felt better following rest and simple treatments. You should seek medical advice urgently if you experience:

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

What should I do if I am concerned about side effects?

Side effects normally last less than a week. If your side effects seem to get worse or if you are concerned, call **NHS24** free on **111**. If you do seek advice from a health professional, make sure you tell them about your vaccination so that they can assess you properly.

Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine through the Yellow Card Scheme at **coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk**

For more information about side effects, visit **www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccinesideeffects**

Is there any reason I should not get my booster dose?

There are very few people who should not have a booster dose. If you've had a very severe reaction to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you should discuss this with a health professional.

What if I'm ill on the day?

You should still go for your COVID-19 vaccine if you have a minor illness without a fever. If you feel very unwell, your vaccine may be postponed until you have fully recovered.

If you're feeling unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, do not attend your vaccine appointment. You should self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test. This can be done at **www.nhsinform.scot/testing**

Translations | Easy read | BSL | Audio | Large print | Braille

For more information, including other formats and translation support:

www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine

0800 030 8013

phs.otherformats@phs.scot

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Please visit **www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine** for the most up-to-date information.

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