



UK Health
Security
Agency

NHS **CARE**



A guide to the booster for children at risk aged 5 to 17 years of age

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A leaflet from the NHS and Health and Social Care.

Children aged 5 to 17 years of age in a risk group will be offered a booster of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine this autumn. Appointments will be available from the National Booking Service shortly.

Who is being offered an autumn booster?

COVID-19 is more serious in children with certain underlying health conditions. This winter it is expected that many respiratory infections, including COVID-19 and flu may be circulating at high levels – this may put increasing pressure on hospitals and other health care services.

For these reasons, those aged 5 years and over in clinical risk groups are being offered an autumn booster of COVID-19 vaccine. The autumn booster will also be offered to families of individuals with weakened immune systems.

As the number of COVID-19 infections increases over the winter, this booster should help to reduce your child's risk of being admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

The booster may also provide some protection against mild Omicron infection but such protection does not last for long.

Timing of the autumn booster

Your child should be offered an appointment between September and December, with those at highest risk being called in first. Your child should have their booster at least 3 months after their last dose of vaccine.

If your child is eligible for a flu vaccine, they may be able to have them at the same time – if not please go ahead anyway, they can catch up with the other vaccine later.

Which vaccine will your child be offered?

Your child will be given a booster dose of a vaccine made by Pfizer. They may be offered an updated combination version of these booster vaccines –the combination vaccines include:

- a half-dose of the previous vaccine combined with:
- a half-dose of a vaccine against the Omicron variant

Both the previous and the combination vaccines boost protection very well, although the combination vaccines produce slightly higher levels of antibody against some strains of Omicron.

As we cannot predict which variants of COVID-19 will be circulating this winter, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have concluded that both types of vaccine can be used in children, and that no one should delay vaccination to receive combination vaccines.

So they will be offered the right vaccine for them at the right time.

Please accept the vaccination that is offered to your child as soon as you are able to – it is important for them to have their booster and build up their protection against severe illness before the winter.

Who cannot take up the offer of an autumn booster

There are very few children who should not have this booster. If your child has had a severe reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine you should discuss this with your doctor.

Side effects

Common side effects:

As with your child's previous dose, the common side effects are the same for all COVID-19 vaccines, including the combination vaccines being used this autumn, and include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in their arm where they had their injection – this tends to be worst around 1 to 2 days after the vaccine
- feeling tired
- headache
- general aches or mild flu-like symptoms

They should rest. You can give them paracetamol to help make them feel better. Please check that the dose and type of paracetamol is correct for their age.

Although a fever can occur within a day or two of vaccination, if your child has any other COVID-19 symptoms or their fever lasts longer, stay at home and they may need to have a test. Symptoms following vaccination normally last less than a week. If your child's symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, you can contact NHS 111 by phone, online at **111.nhs.uk**, by **NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter service** via **www.nhs.uk/111** or by textphone on **18001 111**.

You can also report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme, details at the end of this recording.

Serious side effects:

Cases of inflammation of the heart (called myocarditis or pericarditis) have been reported very rarely after the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. These cases have been seen mostly in young men and within several days of vaccination. Most of the people affected have felt better and recovered quickly following rest and simple treatments. You should seek medical advice urgently if, after vaccination, your child has:

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

If your child had serious side effects after any previous dose you may be advised to avoid or delay further vaccination. You should discuss this with the doctor or specialist. Please see the end of this film to find out how to report side effects.

Can your child still catch COVID-19 after having the vaccine?

The COVID-19 booster will reduce the chance of your child becoming severely unwell from COVID-19 this winter. It may take a few days for their body to build up some extra protection from the booster. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but any infection should be less severe.

If your child has not had all their COVID-19 vaccinations

If your child has not yet had either of their first 2 doses of the vaccine (or a third dose for those with a weakened immune system) they should have them as soon as possible.

If your child has a COVID-19 positive result, when can they have their autumn booster?

If your child is unwell, wait until they have recovered to have their vaccine. If they have confirmed COVID-19 they should wait until 4 weeks before having their vaccine. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you or your child are self-isolating or waiting for a COVID-19 test.

Further information

You can find out more in the following COVID-19 guides:

Easy-read COVID-19 guide for children and young people: **qrco.de/cyperc**

COVID-19 vaccination: women who are pregnant or breastfeeding: **qrco.de/pregc19**

COVID-19 vaccinations – a guide for people with a weakened immune system: **qrco.de/immc**

Easy-read guide to what to expect after your COVID-19 vaccination: **qrco.de/aduer**

An information leaflet on what to expect after vaccination is available to download or order at: **qrco.de/expect**

You can find out more about coronavirus booster vaccination at: **qrco.de/nhsb**

Find out more details and possible side effects in the product information leaflets for UK recipients of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at:

**[coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/
productinformation](https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/productinformation)**

For a very small number of people another vaccine product may be advised by your doctor.

You can also report suspected side effects on the Yellow Card scheme website at:

www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard, by calling **0800 731 6789** (lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) or by downloading the Yellow Card app.



This large print leaflet and a standard version is also available in audio, braille, BSL and easy read.

The leaflet can be ordered or downloaded from:

www.healthpublications.gov.uk, by calling: **0300 123 1002** or by textphone: **0300 123 1003** (lines are open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday).

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