HSE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION OFFICE

IMMUNISATION BULLETIN 55
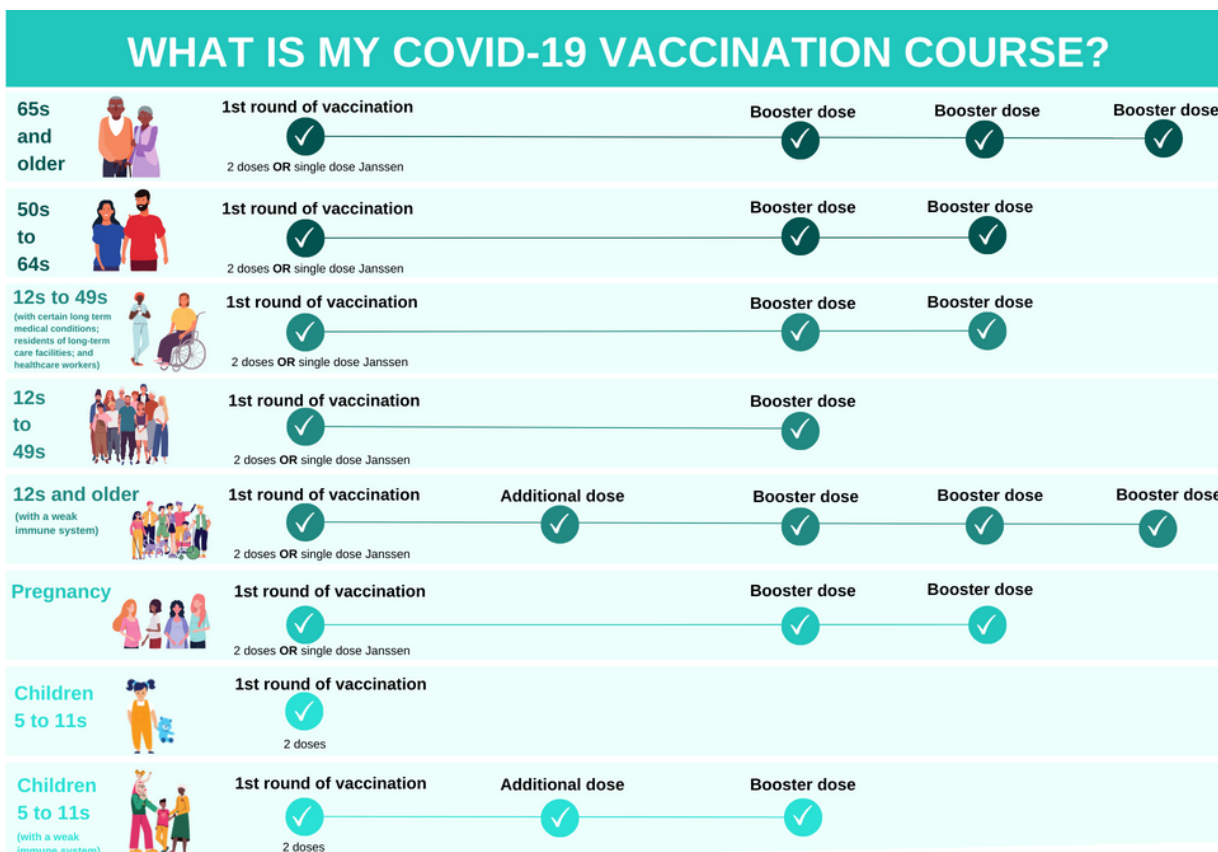
THIS EDITION COVERS

- COVID-19 vaccine
  - Eligibility
  - Intervals
  - Information Materials
  - NIAC Advice
- Influenza vaccine for the 2022/2023 season
- Post Observation Advice

COVID-19 Vaccine

Who is eligible for a 3rd COVID-19 Booster?
Only those aged 65 years and over or with a weak immune system are currently eligible for a third booster at least four months after their last vaccine or COVID-19 infection

It is important to follow this vaccine journey for each patient.

WHAT IS MY COVID-19 VACCINATION COURSE?

Group		1st round of vaccination	Additional dose	Booster dose	Booster dose	Booster dose
65s and older		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)		Booster dose	Booster dose	Booster dose
50s to 64s		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)		Booster dose	Booster dose	
12s to 49s (with certain long term medical conditions; residents of long-term care facilities; and healthcare workers)		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)		Booster dose	Booster dose	
12s to 49s		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)		Booster dose		
12s and older (with a weak immune system)		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)	Additional dose	Booster dose	Booster dose	Booster dose
Pregnancy		1st round of vaccination (2 doses OR single dose Janssen)		Booster dose	Booster dose	
Children 5 to 11s		1st round of vaccination (2 doses)				
Children 5 to 11s (with a weak immune system)		1st round of vaccination (2 doses)	Additional dose	Booster dose		

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Download the vaccination journeys for each group on our website **here.**

What intervals should be used?
NIAC recommends at least 4 months after the last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for ALL booster doses.

For those who have had laboratory confirmed/antigen positive with symptoms COVID-19 breakthrough infection since full vaccination, the booster dose should be deferred for 4 months after diagnosis.

If a dose was given before the minimum interval, this is not considered a valid vaccine. However, revaccination is not recommended.

To avoid this occurring imnd as is good practice, you can use the lookup function available from HSE ICT, or COVAX to check when your patient was last vaccinated before administering a vaccine to them.

Please note that the National Immunisation Office cannot respond to I.T. system queries.
All queries regarding the GP software system should be sent to gpvaccines@vision.com
All queries regarding the Pharmacy I.T. queries should be sent to pharmacyvaccines@vision.com

COVID-19 Vaccine (cont. from page 2)

What vaccines are recommended for a COVID-19 Booster?

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) advises that people can get any COVID-19 mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) as a booster dose, including the adapted vaccines, even if you had a different vaccine before.

Advice by age group: If people are:
- 5 to 11, they will be offered Pfizer vaccine 10mcg for COVID-19
- 12 to 29, they will be offered Pfizer vaccine 30mcg for COVID-19
- 30 or over they will be offered Pfizer vaccine or Moderna vaccine for COVID-19
- under 50, Jcovden (Janssen) is not recommended.

If people cannot have or do not wish to have an mRNA vaccine, they may be offered the Novavax vaccine, or when available and indicated, the Janssen vaccine, which are available from CVC's.

Novavax is approved for use for people who are 12 and over.

Jcovden (Janssen) is approved for use for people who are 18 and over.

> **ⓘ Authorised bivalent mRNA vaccines are preferentially recommended for all those aged 12 years and older who are in the eligible cohort for an adapted bivalent booster vaccination.**

Remember that the adapted vaccines cannot be used for primary courses or the additional dose. The original vaccines will remain available in CVC's for people who require them.

Statutory Instrument S.I. No 467 of 2022, was signed and came into force on 20th September, which allows those professions who require it to be able to administer the adapted vaccines and the original RTU Comirnaty vaccine without a written prescription.

> **ⓘ** Read the Medicine Protocols **here.**

NIAC Advice for Bivalent mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

The RCPI National Immunisation Advisory Committee has published recommendations regarding Bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines and updated their COVID-19 Chapter in the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland.

> **ⓘ** Read their recommendations **here** and the updated chapter **here.**

Materials for patients

Materials for patients have been updated and available to read on the HSE website.

> **ⓘ** Read updated patient materials **here.**

Influenza vaccine for the 2022/2023 season

Who is eligible to receive the HSE Influenza vaccine this season?

People can get a HSE flu vaccine if they are:
- aged 65 years and older
- aged 2 to 17 years
- a healthcare worker
- pregnant
- living in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- in regular contact with pigs, poultry or waterfowl

People with these conditions can also get a free flu vaccine:
- chronic heart disease, including acute coronary syndrome
- chronic liver disease
- chronic kidney failure
- chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma, or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
- chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system
- diabetes
- Down syndrome
- haemoglobinopathies
- a body mass index (BMI) over 40
- immunosuppression due to disease or treatment (including asplenia or hyposplenism, and all cancer patients)
- children with a moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorder such as cerebral palsy
- children on long-term aspirin therapy
- any condition that can compromise respiratory function, like spinal cord injury, seizure disorder or other neuromuscular disorder, especially people also attending special schools or day centres

Free flu vaccines can be offered to carers or household contacts of people who have:
- a health condition listed above
- Down syndrome

The Flu vaccine and its administration are available free of charge for patients listed above. Please input data onto the ICT system so uptake can be recorded and for GP's and pharmacies to be reimbursed for administration. You should record the relevant risk factor/eligibility group when inputting the information and more than one risk factor can be added if appropriate.

The HSE flu vaccines should not be offered to household contacts of:
- people aged 65 years and older, who do not also have a chronic health condition
- pregnant women
- children aged 2 to 17 years
- healthcare workers
- carers

Influenza vaccine for the 2022/2023 season (cont. from page 4)

Can influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine be given at the same time?
The National Immunisation Advisory Committee says that other vaccines can be given with COVID-19 vaccines.

Influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine should be administered at the same time to eligible groups. There should be an interval of at least 4 months since the last COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 infection (post completed primary vaccination course).

When co-administering two vaccines like COVID-19 and flu, each vaccine should be given in separate arms. If giving a third vaccination eg pneumococcal, make sure to give the ipsilateral vaccines 2.5cms apart.

Post vaccination observation advice

Cases of anaphylaxis have been reported following administration of vaccines.

NIAC recommends all vaccine recipients should be observed for at least 15 minutes after vaccination. If this is not practicable, vaccine recipients should wait in the vicinity for 15 minutes.

Vaccine recipients should be advised to seek urgent medical attention if they have symptoms suggestive of an allergic reaction such as difficulty breathing, feeling faint, rapid heartbeat or a skin rash.

ℹ️ Read the NIAC anaphylaxis chapter **here.**

Website

Visit our website **www.immunisation.ie** regularly for the most up to date information to support vaccinators and health professionals responding to queries.

ℹ️ **Visit website here.**

HSeLanD Vaccination Training Programme

ℹ️ **Visit HSeLanD here.**

You will find programmes developed by our office by logging into your account on www.hseland.ie selecting **courses** then selecting **clinical skills** and finally selecting **National Immunisation Office**.

Contact HSeLanD here.

If you have any issues with the platform please contact HSeLand directly.

Do you have queries?

Clinical queries from healthcare professionals can be directed to our dedicated email address

Send your query here.

Should vaccines be exposed to temperatures outside of parameters please contact a National Immunisation Office pharmacist immediately. Contacts include:

- Cliona Kiersey: mobile 087 9915452
- Achal Gupta: mobile 087 4064810

Queries that are not clinical or technical cannot be answered by the National Immunisation Office

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