

HSE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION OFFICE

IMMUNISATION BULLETIN 52

THIS EDITION COVERS

- NEW recommendations on COVID-19 booster vaccination from NIAC
- Maternal Vaccination and Risk of Hospitalization for COVID-19 among Infants

NEW recommendations on COVID-19 booster vaccination from NIAC

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee has issued new recommendations on COVID-19 booster vaccination. These recommendations have been accepted by the Department of Health.



PLEASE NOTE THAT PLANNING IS NEEDED FOR BOOSTER DOSES FOR THESE NEW GROUPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE HSE.

Planning includes the following:

- Planning for timing of vaccination in relation to the influenza vaccine.
- Updating IT system to allow accurate recording of immunisation
- Clinical guidance, training for vaccinators, medicine protocols and other supporting documents
- Communication and information for the public

MORE INFORMATION WILL BE ISSUED IN DUE COURSE

Summary of recommendations on Additional Booster COVID-19 Vaccination

- 1** All those who are unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated are strongly recommended to complete a primary COVID-19 vaccination course and booster vaccination as outlined in Table 2. Access for hard to reach populations and new arrivals should be facilitated.
- 2** All those aged 65 years and older and those with immunocompromise at the time of their primary or first booster vaccination and who have not yet availed of the recommended second booster vaccine are strongly recommended to do so.
- 3** A first mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine is now recommended for
 - those aged 5 – 11 years with immunocompromise associated with a sub optimal response to vaccines at the time of their primary or additional vaccination
- 4** A second mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine is now recommended for
 - those aged 50-64 years
 - those aged 12–49 years who have underlying medical conditions associated with a higher risk of severe COVID-19 See Table 5a.2 Underlying conditions associated with very high risk or high risk of severe COVID-19 disease (unshaded)
 - those aged 12-49 years who are residents of long term care facilities
- 5** A second mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine is recommended for
 - healthcare workers, and when practicable, should be given at the same time as seasonal influenza vaccine.
- 6** A third mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine is recommended for
 - those aged 65 years and older
 - those aged 12 – 64 years with immunocompromise associated with a sub optimal response to vaccines at the time of their primary or booster vaccinationWhen practicable, it should be given at the same time as seasonal influenza vaccine.



NEW recommendations on COVID-19 booster vaccination from NIAC (cont. from page 2)

- 7** To enhance maternal protection and provide optimal benefit to the infant, an additional mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine (i.e. a second booster vaccine) is recommended in pregnancy at 16 weeks gestation or later for those who have not received a booster vaccine in the current pregnancy.
- 8** mRNA booster vaccines should be given as follows:

 - aged 30 years and older Comirnaty (0.3ml/30 mcg) or Spikevax (0.25ml/50 mcg)
 - aged 12-29 years Comirnaty (0.3ml/30 mcg)
 - aged 5-11 years Comirnaty (0.2ml/10mcg)
- 9** Following the primary vaccine series or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, a four month interval is recommended for any subsequent COVID-19 vaccine doses. A minimum interval of three months may be exceptionally used.
- 10** COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time or at any interval before or after any vaccine. This includes seasonal influenza and pertussis vaccines.
- 11** If an mRNA booster vaccine is contraindicated or declined, a non-mRNA vaccine may be given.

Table 1: NIAC recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines by age and immune status July 2022.

Group		Primary course*	Additional dose	1 st booster	2 nd booster	3 rd booster
65 years and older		✓✓		✓	✓	✓
50-64 years		✓✓		✓	✓	
12-49 years	<i>Underlying medical conditions</i>	✓✓		✓	✓	
	<i>Residents of long term care facilities</i>	✓✓		✓	✓	
	<i>Healthcare workers</i>	✓✓		✓	✓	
	<i>Others</i>	✓✓		✓		
Pregnancy		✓✓		✓	✓**	
5-11 years		✓✓				
12 years and older	<i>Immunocompromise associated with a sub optimal response to vaccines</i>	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		✓✓	✓	✓		

*two dose primary course (one dose if COVID-19 vaccine Janssen)

**at 16 weeks gestation or later if not already boosted in this pregnancy

Visit the RCPI website [here](#).

Maternal Vaccination and Risk of Hospitalization for COVID-19 among Infants

This study published in the New England Journal of Medicine examined whether COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy protects infants younger than 6 months of age.

Results

The effectiveness of maternal vaccination against hospitalization for COVID-19 among infants was 52% (95% CI, 33 to 65) overall, 80% (95% CI, 60 to 90) during the delta period, and 38% (95% CI, 8 to 58) during the omicron period. Effectiveness was 69% (95% CI, 50 to 80) when maternal vaccination occurred after 20 weeks of pregnancy and 38% (95% CI, 3 to 60) during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Conclusion

Maternal vaccination with two doses of mRNA vaccine was associated with a reduced risk of hospitalization for COVID-19 in infants younger than 6 months, including for severe illness.

 [Read the study 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.

 [Visit website here.](#)

HSeLand Vaccination Training Programme

COVID-19 vaccination training programme

You can access updates to the National Immunisation Office COVID-19 Vaccination Training Programme for Children 5 to 11, Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen, and Nuvaxovid vaccine through your HSeLand account.

We would encourage you to log in and complete the updated content in each programme to refresh your knowledge and ensure you are up to date with your COVID-19 Vaccination Training.

Other immunisation training programmes

You will also find other 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**.

Our programmes cover topics like "Communicating about vaccines", "HPV vaccine", the "Flu vaccine", "LAIV flu vaccine" and "vaccines in pregnancy", "Vaccines - supporting people from Ukraine" and "Storing and Managing Vaccines".

 [Visit HSeLand here.](#)

Do you have queries?

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

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

 [Send your query here.](#)

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