HSE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION OFFICE

IMMUNISATION BULLETIN 67

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HSE National Immunisation Office
immunisation.ie
29 September 2023

COVID-19 vaccination

NIAC recommendations regarding Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster vaccines

NIAC recommends an Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster vaccine for:

- All those aged 50 years and older
- Those aged 5-49 years with immunocompromise associated with a sub-optimal response to vaccination
- Those aged 5-49 years with medical conditions associated with higher risk of COVID-19 hospitalisation, severe disease or death
- Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions
- Healthcare workers

Those aged 18-49 years and not in one of the above groups who seek vaccination following discussion with their healthcare provider may also receive it.

For all those now eligible, an Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster vaccine dose is recommended irrespective of the number of previous booster doses or types of COVID-19 vaccines received.

For those **aged 50 years and older**, an interval of **6 months** is recommended following any previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection. An interval of at least 3 months may be used for operational reasons.

For those **aged 5 to 49 years** an interval of **9 months** is recommended following any previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection. An interval of at least 3 months may be used for operational reasons.

For those **aged 5 years and older with immunocompromise** associated with a suboptimal response to vaccination, an interval of **6 months** is recommended following the previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection. An interval of at least 3 months may be used for operational reasons.

The minimum interval of at least three months may be used where there is need to provide early protection, or to facilitate co-administration with influenza vaccine.

For more information, see NIAC Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland.

COVID-19 vaccine recommended for the Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster

On August 30th the European Medicine Agency's (EMA) Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) recommended authorising an adapted Comirnaty vaccine targeting the Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommend the preferential use of the newly adapted monovalent vaccine, Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 in the Autumn/Winter booster campaign.

Comirnaty 30 micrograms (0.3ml) Omicron XBB.1.5 (RTU) vaccine is recommended for all aged 12 years and older who require booster vaccination.

Comirnaty 10 micrograms (0.2ml) Omicron XBB.1.5 is recommended for all 5 to 11 years with immunocompromise who require booster vaccination.

For more information, see EMA recommends approval of adapted COVID-19 vaccine targeting Omicron XBB.1.5.

COVID-19 vaccination updates continue on page 3

COVID-19 vaccination (cont.)

VidPrevtyn Beta

VidPrevtyn Beta vaccine is licensed as a booster for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 for those aged 18 years and older who have previously received an mRNA or adenoviral vector COVID-19 vaccine.

NIAC recommends that VidPrevtyn Beta may be used as an alternate booster vaccine if there is a contraindication or precaution to an mRNA vaccine or Nuvaxovid, or a person aged 18 years or older has chosen not to receive these vaccines. VidPrevtyn Beta is available from HSE vaccination sites only.

NIAC recommendations for COVID-19 booster vaccination in pregnancy

For pregnant adolescents and adults, a COVID-19 booster vaccine is recommended once in pregnancy.

If a pregnant person has not had a previous COVID-19 booster, the first booster dose is recommended at least 4 months after their last COVID-19 vaccine dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection.

For pregnant persons who have had a booster prior to pregnancy, they should receive a booster once in pregnancy at an interval of 6 months or more since their last booster dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Booster doses can be given at any stage in pregnancy but ideally should be given between 20-34 weeks.

If it is more than 12 months since their previous COVID-19 vaccine or infection administration earlier in pregnancy should be considered.

Of note: For those who are pregnant and are immunocompromised, a second booster dose within the same pregnancy may be considered if 6 months has elapsed since their last booster dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Frequently asked questions

Most of my patients who are aged 50 years and older or are at- risk and aged 5-49, received their most recent COVID-19 booster dose 4 months ago. Can I give the booster dose now at the same time as the flu vaccine?

Yes you can. NIAC advises that when there are operational reasons, like giving the flu vaccine at the same time, the COVID-19 booster dose can be given once at least 3 months have passed since the last dose. The minimum 3-month interval can also be used when vaccinating people after COVID-19 infection in these circumstances.

Laura Brennan HPV Catch-Up Vaccination Programme

New eligibility criteria for the Laura Brennan HPV Catch-up Vaccination Programme

The HSE is offering young people another chance to protect themselves from HPV, by receiving the HPV vaccine, if they were not vaccinated when they were offered it previously.

The Laura Brennan HPV Catch-Up Vaccination Programme will be available until the end of December 2023 and is being delivered in HSE immunisation clinics and in schools.

This catch-up programme is providing a once only opportunity for those in the eligible groups who have not already received the HPV vaccine to be vaccinated. Additional groups are now eligible for catch-up HPV vaccination as part of the programme.

Who is eligible to receive HPV vaccine as part of the Laura Brennan HPV Catch-up Vaccination Programme?

Those eligible for HPV vaccination under the Laura Brennan HPV Catch-Up Vaccination Programme are:

- The below students still in secondary school – both boys and girls – who have not already received the HPV vaccine:
  - Female students in 2nd – 6th year of secondary school, homeschool or a special school
  - Male students in 2nd – 6th year of secondary school, homeschool or a special school

- All females who have left second level education and are under 25 years old on the date of vaccination, provided they have not already received the vaccine
  - (Of note: Unvaccinated female international students ordinarily resident* in Ireland for the purposes of receiving health services in this age group are also eligible for HPV vaccination under the catch-up programme).

- All males who have left second level education and are under 22 years old on the date of vaccination, provided they have not already received the vaccine.
  - (Of note: Unvaccinated male international students ordinarily resident* in Ireland for the purposes of receiving health services in this age group are also eligible for HPV vaccination under the catch-up programme).

- Refugees and Applicants Seeking Protection in Ireland who are gender and age equivalent to the above listed groups are also eligible for catch-up HPV vaccination under the Laura Brennan HPV Catch-up Vaccination Programme – provided they have not already received the HPV vaccine.

*You are ordinarily resident if you have been living in Ireland for at least a year or you intend to live here for at least one year.

For more information, please visit Citizens Information website.

Don’t delay booking your HPV catch-up appointment.

Visit the HSE website to learn more about the HPV vaccine and book your appointment today.

Website

Visit our website

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

HSeLanD Vaccination Training Programme

Visit HSeLanD

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

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

Do you have queries?

Send your query

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:

- email pharmacynio@hse.ie
- Leah Gaughan: mobile 087 1881667
- Achal Gupta: mobile 087 4064810
- Cliona Kiersey: mobile 087 9915452

If you have a query about errors or changes to records on COVAX, please contact the Contact Management Programme on 01 240 8786.

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

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