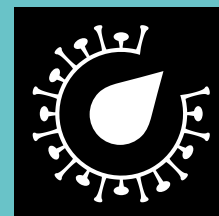# Living with COVID-19

COVID-19 VACCINE
Public Health Advice

Advice for people at higher risk

People who have high-risk health conditions, or who have a weak immune system, are more at risk of serious illness if they get COVID-19. If this affects you, or someone close to you, you may feel concerned about COVID-19 as restrictions ease. Follow these steps to protect yourself and people around you.

- Stay up-to-date with all your COVID-19 vaccines.
- Take quick action if you have symptoms – stay at home and get a test.
- Know about COVID-19 treatments that could help you – visit **www.hse.ie** or ask a health professional for advice.
- Protect yourself day to day – wear a face mask, wash hands and let fresh air into your home.

What causes a weak immune system?

You may have a weak immune system because you have a health condition or you are getting treatment for a health condition.

Causes may include, but are not limited to:

- getting cancer treatment
- some treatments for autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis (MS) and inflammatory bowel diseases
- living with HIV and not on effective treatment
- having an organ transplant or a bone-marrow transplant
- if you have a chronic kidney disease and are on dialysis or have an eGFR <30ml/min

If you are unsure if you have a weak immune system, you can speak to your GP or consultant.

You can find more information about having a weak immune system on **www.hse.ie**.

How many COVID-19 vaccine doses should I have received?

If you have a weak immune system, you should have received:

- your first round of COVID-19 vaccinations
- an additional dose of the vaccine
- a first and second booster dose

A second booster dose is now recommended for people with a weak immune system aged 12 and over, and all adults aged 65 and over. You can get your booster from participating GPs and pharmacies, or you can book a vaccination centre appointment on **www.hse.ie**.

Further information

You can read more about the vaccines or COVID-19 testing on **www.hse.ie** or call HSE Live on **1800 700 700**.

You can also talk to your GP, nurse, pharmacist or person who is vaccinating you.

HSE

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

If you are aged 12 and over and have a weak immune system you should have received the following COVID-19 vaccines:	
First round of COVID-19 vaccination	This means dose 1 and dose 2 if you received the AstraZeneca, Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. This means a single dose if you received the Janssen vaccine.
Additional dose	If you had a weak immune system at the time of your first round of COVID-19 vaccinations, you should have been offered an additional dose to give you better protection. You would have received this additional dose 2 months after your last vaccine.
First booster dose	If you are aged 12 and over you should get a first booster dose at least 3 months after your additional dose.
Second booster dose	If you are aged 12 and over and have a weak immune system you should get a second booster at least 4 months after your first booster.
If you have had COVID-19 since your first booster, wait at least 4 months after you tested positive or from when your symptoms started before getting your second booster.	

Why do I need these additional doses and boosters?

Some people with a weak immune system may not respond to vaccines as well as others. Having a weak immune system puts you at higher risk of serious illness if you get COVID-19. Getting your second booster will give you more protection against this.

Act fast on symptoms of COVID-19

If you have a weak immune system and have symptoms of COVID-19, get a PCR test. Please don't delay when you notice any symptoms (cough, temperature, tiredness) – get a test straight away. As well as getting your test, make sure to stay at home, and self-isolate if you can.

This is important because new medicines are available to treat people with COVID-19 who are at the highest risk of becoming seriously ill. They work best when they are given in the early stage of the infection, usually in the first 5 days.

You will be advised by your GP or consultant if these medicines are for you. You can read more about COVID-19 treatments on **www.hse.ie**.

Keeping safer day to day

You may feel anxious about getting back to normal and wondering how to keep safe if you have a high-risk health condition. It may feel harder to take precautions and limit what you would like to do when other people are getting back to normal. However, the things you have been doing all along to protect your health still work to keep you safer.

- It is good to keep active and look after your general health. A healthy way of life improves your chance of recovery if you get COVID-19.
- Try to avoid crowded indoor spaces. If you have to be in a crowded space, wear a medical grade or respirator face mask. Respirator masks are often referred to as FFP2 masks.
- Always practice good hand hygiene.
- Continue to keep your distance where possible.
- If you see someone coughing or sneezing, move away if you can.

At home, make sure everyone you live with is vaccinated. Try to keep the number of people who come into your house to a small number of people you trust. People may need to visit you to see how you are, work in your home or provide healthcare.

Check that anyone who visits is well when they arrive. Ask them to clean their hands, to wear a medical grade or respirator mask and to keep some distance from you whenever possible.

It is important that you continue to use the healthcare services you need. It is OK to ask or remind healthcare workers about precautions. If you have an appointment with your GP or at a hospital or clinic, it is important to attend.