



Additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine

Information for parents and guardians of children and young people aged 12–15 with a weak immune system

What is a weak immune system?

The immune system fights infection and germs in the body. Immune systems can be weak because of health problems or medications that weaken the ability to fight infection.

Your child's doctor will help you decide if they should get an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Is my child more at risk from COVID-19 if their immune system is weak?

Yes, they are at risk of getting seriously ill if they get COVID-19.

My child already got a COVID-19 vaccine. Why are they being offered an additional dose of vaccine?

We hope that an additional dose of vaccine:

- may improve their immune system's response to the vaccine.
- may give them better protection against COVID-19.
- may prevent them from getting seriously ill with COVID-19.

Which vaccine can they get?

We are offering young people a single dose of the Comirnaty® (Pfizer BioNTech) vaccine. This is an mRNA vaccine. Children and young people aged 12–15 years can have this vaccine even if they already got a different vaccine. We will give you an information leaflet on the vaccine they will receive. It has important information, please read it. You can also find it on hse.ie/covid19vaccine/

When should they get an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

They should get an additional dose of the vaccine at least two months after finishing a course of COVID-19 vaccine.

If they have had COVID-19 since they were vaccinated, they need to wait for six months before getting an additional dose.

What do we know about the safety of getting an additional dose of vaccine?

We have less information on the safety of an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Some countries are giving an additional dose. Studies on people getting an additional dose haven't shown any serious side effects.

Is an additional dose of vaccine licensed by the European Medicines Agency?

The EMA has approved an additional dose of the same mRNA vaccine.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC), in Ireland, has also recommended that you can get any mRNA vaccine regardless of which vaccine you have received. For example, if you got the AstraZeneca vaccine, you may now be offered an additional dose of Pfizer. This is recommended by NIAC but not yet approved by the EMA.

Visit ema.europa.eu for more information.

Can young people get the additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine or other vaccines?

Yes, you can get the additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine or other vaccines like the HPV, Tdap or MenACWY vaccine offered to first year students in secondary schools.

Further information

You can read more about the vaccines on hse.ie/covid19vaccine/

You can also talk to your GP, nurse, pharmacist or vaccinator.