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### **COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Update**

Dear Doctor,

Thank you for your participation in the Spring Booster Vaccination Programme which concludes on 16<sup>th</sup> June. The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme will pause over the summer months for the majority of people, with the exception of the cohorts detailed below.

The following groups will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination over the summer months:

- Primary courses for those aged 6 months and older.
- First booster dose for people aged 18 years and over (12 years and over if immunocompromised), if it has been at least 4 months since they completed their primary course.
- Pregnant women in the appropriate stage of pregnancy and where the appropriate time since last dose of vaccine has elapsed. Please refer to latest NIAC recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy\*.

\*[https://rcpi.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO\\_3537e4d8-e170-4922-b566-8cfc6b148ed2/](https://rcpi.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO_3537e4d8-e170-4922-b566-8cfc6b148ed2/)

#### **Community Vaccination Centres**

From this week onwards, Community Vaccinations Centres will wind down. Over the summer, vaccination services offered through HSE channels will be limited to the following:

- COVID-19 clinics for children aged 6 months – 11 years.
- Primary course and 1st booster doses to those eligible who are resident in Long Term Residential Facilities, Housebound, in the custody of the Irish Prison Services, and inpatient in a Hospital.
- Provision of non mRNA vaccines to those eligible, with clinics established based on demand.

#### **Summer Vaccination in General Practice**

GPs are requested to maintain some vaccine stock to continue to provide COVID-19 vaccines to the following people if they come forward:

- Those aged 12 years and over who require Primary course vaccination
- Those aged 18 years and over who require a first booster



- Those aged 12-17 years who are Immunocompromised and require a first booster
- Those who are pregnant and require a booster dose

If patients who were eligible for a Spring booster come forward for booster after 16th June, then GPs may vaccinate if deemed in the best interests of the patient, but having regard to the impact on Autumn booster timing. Note that anyone who has received a booster dose since the 1<sup>st</sup> March has received a Spring booster.

For full clinical information and details on recommended intervals, please refer to the NIO clinical guidance at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>.

Note that there are still a small number of countries which require foreign visitors to present vaccination certificates, for example Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan. In addition, those who are emigrating or studying abroad may require evidence of vaccination.

It is important to ensure that people eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine over the summer months are able to avail of it when requested. Thus we would ask that as many GP practices as possible make vaccines available to those outlined in the groups above who may present.

It may be possible to group several eligible people together to maximise vaccine usage. In cases where this is not possible, then one person may be vaccinated from a vial of vaccine to ensure their protection in a timely way.

If an eligible patient comes forward and you are not in a position to provide the vaccination, you can direct them to HSE Live Freephone 1800 700 700, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 9am to 5pm, for support in accessing a provider in their area.

### **Autumn campaign**

In line with current NIAC guidance, an autumn COVID-19 booster vaccine will be offered to:

- those aged 50 years and older
- those aged 5-49 years with immunocompromise associated with a suboptimal response to vaccination
- those aged 5-49 years with medical conditions associated with a higher risk of COVID-19 hospitalisation, severe disease or death
- health and care workers.

It is planned that the Autumn COVID-19 booster campaign will run in conjunction with the seasonal Flu vaccine, where possible. Further details about the Autumn booster will be released in due course.



## **Vaccines & Ordering**

Vaccine deliveries for COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be fortnightly as per your calendar for June and July, they will then move to monthly until the Autumn, when they will return to fortnightly in the usual way during the Flu vaccine programme period. You will receive a notification when this happens. Please ensure all vaccine orders are placed before your cut off time to minimise the number of exceptional orders that are requested, as these may not always be able to be facilitated.

During the summer period, the vaccine being supplied to General Practice will be Comirnaty® BA.4-5.

General Practices should continue to order COVID-19 vaccines through the online NCCS system available at [www.ordervaccines.ie](http://www.ordervaccines.ie).

Please also remember to return any out of date stock of both COVID-19 and Flu vaccine to NCCS using the normal process.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to General Practitioners and their teams for the efficient manner in which the Spring Booster Campaign has been delivered and for your ongoing commitment and support in the provision of COVID-19 Vaccinations.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', written over a horizontal line.

**Geraldine Crowley**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Enhanced Community Care Programme &**  
**Primary Care Contract**