

# COVID-19 spring booster will help protect those most at risk

People living in the North East and North Cumbria who are at increased risk from COVID-19 will be offered extra protection this spring.

Following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the NHS will offer a free COVID-19 spring vaccine to those most vulnerable and at highest risk from severe illness from the virus.

This will include people aged 75 and over, residents in care homes for older adults and anyone aged six months and over who is immunosuppressed.

Dr Catherine Monaghan, medical director, NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and medical advisor to the North East and North Cumbria COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, said: "For some COVID-19 is unpleasant but for many, particularly older people and those who are immunosuppressed, it can be very dangerous and even life-threatening.

"The COVID-19 vaccine remains our best protection against the virus and this year's spring booster programme will continue to focus on those at greatest risk of getting seriously ill, who will benefit the most from getting a further dose".

Vaccinations for residents in care homes will start on the 15 April ahead of the wider regional vaccination roll-out to people over 75, and those who are immunosuppressed, from 22 April.

Those eligible for a COVID-19 spring booster include:

- people aged 75 and over, including all those who turn 75 by 30 June 2024
- all residents in care homes for older adults
- anyone aged six months and over who is immunosuppressed - you may be eligible for the vaccine if you have a disorder affecting your immune system, are undergoing immunosuppressive treatment, such as for cancer, or are taking medications that increase your risk of infection. Check the list of health conditions, treatments and medications that can cause immunosuppression on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If eligible, you will be contacted by the NHS and invited to book your spring booster, GP surgeries may also contact patients directly to book an appointment.

Online bookings will be available from 15 April, with vaccinations starting from 22 April at participating community pharmacies. Online bookings can be made via the NHS App or by searching 'NHS COVID-19 vaccine' .

Anyone who is unable to get online can call 119 for free and book an appointment - translators will be available to help if needed.

Dr Monaghan added: "The spring vaccination offers an additional layer of defence to the most vulnerable people to help top up their immunity.

"I would urge anyone who is eligible to get vaccinated as soon as they can to give themselves the best possible protection over the summer months."

Ends.

For further information contact:

Andrea Jones, communications officer [andrea.jones2@nhs.net](mailto:andrea.jones2@nhs.net)