



# Why am I being asked to wait to have my flu vaccine?

## Information about flu vaccine supplies

**People who are most at risk from the complications of flu are recommended to get a flu vaccine every year. This winter it is especially important with flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) both in circulation. Research shows that if you get both at the same time you may be more seriously ill.**

### Who is eligible for a flu vaccine?

You can get a free flu vaccine if you are: aged 65 years old and over (including those aged 65 by 31 March 2021); have certain health conditions; are at high risk from coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list) or live with someone who is; are pregnant; or receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer of an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick.

Children aged 2 to 11 years old on the 31 August 2020 are also eligible for the flu vaccine (with school aged children being offered it in school).

Some health and social care workers can also get a flu vaccine at a GP surgery or pharmacy. This year the free flu vaccine will be offered to healthy 50 to 64 year olds later in the season.

**Visit [www.nhs.uk/flujob](http://www.nhs.uk/flujob) for more information on why it is important to have the flu vaccine and check whether you are eligible.**

### Flu mmunisation

Helping to protect people, every winter



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## **I am in one of the listed groups. Why am I being asked to wait to have my flu vaccine?**

Overall there is no shortage of flu vaccine with enough ordered to vaccinate 30 million people. However, it is usual for manufacturers to stagger deliveries of vaccine so you may have to wait to receive your vaccination.

When the first deliveries arrive in September, vaccinations begin to be offered and these continue throughout the autumn. This season, early demand for flu vaccine has been higher than usual due to concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. This means that some GP practices and pharmacies will have to ask people to wait until they receive further deliveries.

## **Can I go elsewhere if my GP practice or pharmacy has run out?**

If you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, you may get it either from your GP practice or a pharmacy offering NHS flu vaccinations. This means that if one of them does not currently have stock in, you can try elsewhere. They should also be able to tell you when they expect their next deliveries.

Pregnant women can ask their maternity provider for the free flu vaccine and some of those visiting hospitals, either as in- or out-patients may also be offered the flu vaccine there.



## **Why are some people still being offered the vaccine and not others?**

There are several types of flu vaccines available. You will be offered one that is recommended for you based on your age. This means some people will be offered a flu vaccine that is in stock while others, who need a different type of vaccine, may have to wait.

## **Wouldn't it be better to have any type of flu vaccine rather than wait?**

Providers of flu vaccination services are required to offer the vaccine that is most effective for you. It is better to wait to get the right vaccine so that you get the most benefit from it.

## **When do you need to have a flu vaccination for it to offer protection?**

It is best to have the vaccine before flu starts to circulate, which is usually from December onwards. But if it is later in the year than this, it is still worth having.

The priority this season is to vaccinate those who are most at risk from flu first, including anyone aged 50 to 64 years old who has a health condition that makes them more at risk from flu. Other healthy 50 to 64 year olds will be offered the vaccine later on in the season (from November/December) when additional supply becomes available.

## **What should I do now?**

If you can't have your flu vaccine now, you will receive a letter notifying you when you can book an appointment at your GP surgery or pharmacy. Or you can stay in touch with them and book one at the next opportunity.