

COVID-19 vaccinations for 12-15s – FAQ for parents

September 2021

How will I know which vaccinations are going to be given?

The information we ask your child's school to send you tells you which vaccinations are taking place. This year, the national flu programme has been extended and is being offered to all students up to and including year 11. The COVID-19 vaccination programme is being offered to all 12-15 year olds.

Which COVID-19 vaccine will my child receive?

The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine.

How will the COVID-19 vaccine be given to my child?

The COVID-19 vaccine is an intramuscular injection that will be given in the left or right upper arm.

Can the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations be given together?

For most children and young people, flu and COVID-19 vaccines will be given together (co-administered) – the flu vaccine as a nasal spray or injection and COVID-19 vaccine as an injection. It is safe to do this. Having both vaccines together reduces disruption to your child and their school.

If we've already been to your child's school and given them the flu spray or injection, we'll arrange to go back to school and do another session for their COVID-19 vaccination. Only children whose parents have consented separately for both flu and COVID-19 vaccines will be given these together.

How will I know when my child's vaccination will take place?

The School Aged Immunisation Service (SAIS) team sends information to your child's school for them to forward to you, on our behalf. Details include the date we'll be visiting your child's school and which vaccinations we will be administering.

There will also be information about the vaccinations and a link to complete a **consent form**. In some schools the consent form will be paper and will be bought home for you to sign. This needs to be returned to school as quickly as possible.

Will I have to consent for my child to have the vaccinations or will it just be given?

The vaccination will only be given to your child with consent from the person who has parental responsibility for them. In the information we send you via the school, we ask you to tell us whether you do or don't want your child to be vaccinated.

We'll be asking you to consent (or not) for either flu vaccine alone, flu and COVID-19 vaccines together, or the COVID-19 vaccine alone, on separate consent forms. You'll be sent two links via school, or a paper consent form that includes all options.

My child was off sick when the vaccines were given in school, how do I get my child a COVID-19 vaccine now?

If your child is unable to get vaccinated during the school schedule as planned, they will be offered an appointment at a local venue.

What should I do if my child is ill after the vaccine – do they still go to school?

If your child has a sore arm or any of the usual mild symptoms, they should still attend school. If you're worried about any symptoms your child may have, please refer to the information your child brings home or call NHS 111.

I want my child to have the vaccine but they're afraid of needles – can I take them to the GP?

Most young people want to be vaccinated with their school friends and classmates. The SAIS team delivers vaccines to thousands of children and young people every year. They are very skilled and supportive of children who are worried or scared. Please tell us if your child is concerned about needles when you complete the form so we can look after them in school. You can also contact your GP to see if they will provide your child with the vaccine.

My child has recently had COVID-19 – can they have the vaccine?

If your child has had COVID-19 more than 28 days before the vaccination day, they can have the vaccine. If they are not eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine when the SAIS visit the school, they will be offered an alternative appointment

I am a foster carer – can I consent to the vaccine for the child I care for?

The consent for a child or young person to receive a vaccine needs to be from someone who has delegated authority to give permissions for immunisations. If you don't have this, you'll need to speak with the child's social worker to arrange this.

Will you still vaccinate my child for COVID-19 if I as a parent say no?

No. If you indicate on the form that you don't want your child to be COVID-19 vaccinated on the day, we won't vaccinate your child.

It is important that you discuss the vaccination with your child beforehand to avoid any problems and that you complete the consent form indicating your decision. There is the option for children and young people to consent for themselves using a strong legal framework, but this is not being used in these sessions.

Should your child indicate that they wish to be vaccinated and you have said no, we'll arrange an opportunity for both you and your child to discuss with a clinician at a later date.

If you and your child change your mind and would like to go ahead with vaccination at a later date, this can be arranged at a local venue.

Where do the vaccinations take place?

Both COVID-19 and flu vaccinations take place at school and within the normal school day.

I want my child to have the flu vaccine but not COVID-19 – can I do this?

Yes, when you receive the information we send you via the school, please complete both consent forms indicating your choice. If you want us to give the flu vaccination, state 'yes' and if you don't want us to give the COVID-19 vaccination please state 'no'.

The COVID-19 and flu vaccination programmes are separate and individual consent is required for each.

I have a child who is in this age group but is immunosuppressed or clinically extremely vulnerable – can they get a COVID vaccine with the other 12-15s on the day?

Yes, we will offer a first vaccination through the SAIS team as long as we have consent from the person with parental responsibility for your child. You will receive a consent form so that you can indicate your preference for your child.

Your child will need a second vaccination after eight weeks. Currently we expect this second dose to be given through GPs, although this may change in the future.

One of my children is 16 and eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Can he join with the younger children to get vaccinated as well?

We will be offering vaccinations to 16 year olds along with the rest of their class. At 16, young people can give consent themselves so a consent form is not needed.

Can my 11-year-old have the vaccine?

No, the vaccine can only be given to children and young people aged 12 and over.

Where can I find more information about the COVID-19 vaccination?

For more details visit:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-children-and-young-people>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-schools>

Where can I find more about vaccinating 12-15 year olds against COVID-19?

For further details around offering COVID-19 vaccination to 12-15 year olds visit:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-schools/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-young-people-guidance-for-parents>

Product information leaflet

<http://www.hse.ie/covid19vaccinePIL>
