



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
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Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Date: 28th August 2025

Reference: NCO-20-2025

Autumn / Winter Vaccination Programme 2025/2026

Dear Pharmacist,

The autumn / winter vaccination programme 2025/2026 for COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination is due to commence at the beginning of October 2025. Comprehensive information can be found in the communication on the Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccination Programme 2025/2026 from the National Immunisation Office appended to this letter.

Children's LAIV (Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine) Primary Schools Programme

In order to facilitate our planning, Community Pharmacists are reminded to provide the HSE with details of the primary schools where they have agreed to offer LAIV onsite during the upcoming season, using the forms provided at [2025 Pharmacy LAIV Form](#). Details of the primary school Name, Roll Number and Eircode are required for each participating school. Please notify us of any changes or amendments at pharmacyvaccines@vision.com.

COVID-19 Vaccine Programme

Those eligible aged 12 years and over, will be able to avail of vaccination through participating GPs and Pharmacies.

The HSE Mobile Vaccination Teams will offer vaccinations services to:

- Eligible residents in long-term care facilities for older adults
- Those aged under 12 years
- Those eligible who are housebound, see [housebound referral pathway](#)
- COVID-19 vaccination for eligible persons in the custody of the Irish Prison Service (IPS)
- COVID-19 vaccination for eligible in-patients in acute hospitals

Removal of COVID-19 vaccine types

I refer to communication [NCO-15-25](#) re-removal of COVID-19 vaccine types. Comirnaty ® JN.1 (COVID-19 Vaccine) will be removed from PharmaVax Systems effective from 1st September 2025. Any outstanding vaccine records and claims relating to the above product must be entered by 5pm on 1st September 2025 as it will not be possible to submit after this date.

Pharmacy Finder

Community Pharmacies are key in providing easy access and choice to those who require vaccinations. It is important that pharmacies providing vaccination services are listed on the Pharmacy finder, and that this is kept up to date and accurate for each vaccination campaign. We ask Pharmacists to review and update their details using the online form [Pharmacy service listing request](#).



Updates and Resources

The **Operational Guidance** for Vaccination in Community Pharmacies will be available to view or download on the Pharmacy section of our webpage.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/gmscontracts/vaccination-primary-care-contractors-programme/information-for-community-pharmacies/>

Updates and information resources are available at [Vaccination Primary Care Contractors Programme](#).

Guidance Notes to assist you in the management of vaccinations in Primary Care are available to download:

- Guidance Note 2 Completing Vaccination Record on IT Systems
- Guidance Note 3 Guidance on Management of Repeat Primary Course COVID-19 Vaccination for Clinical Reasons

LAIV Resources and Toolkit will be available for the 2025/2026 vaccination programme. LAIV school packs (Consent form, LAIV leaflet, Information letter) will be available to order for GPs and Pharmacies participating in the administration of LAIV in Schools 2025/26 from healthpromotion.ie from mid-September. Note that number of orders for LAIV school packs will be limited.

In advance of the packs being available on healthpromotion.ie participating GP's and Pharmacies can email Leanne.Kane@hse.ie to identify the number of packs required and these can be delivered directly to the surgery.

Updates and resources including toolkit, digital versions of the leaflet and consent forms will be available at [Vaccine information for Healthcare Professionals](#) in due course.

The HSE Nasal Flu consent form for the 2025/2026 flu season, has been updated based on feedback. Parent/Guardians are requested to tick to Consent to Vaccination. The option is to tick the box and sign to give consent for vaccination. The option for capturing where there is no consent for child to receive flu vaccine has been removed.

Information for healthcare professionals is available on immunisation.ie.

Conclusion

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Community Pharmacies and their teams for their support in the delivery of the Autumn / Winter Campaign and the co-administration of COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccinations. I wish you and your team every success in delivering these vaccinations to your patients over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Crowley
Assistant National Director
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
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September 2025

Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccination Programme 2025/2026

Dear Doctor/Pharmacist,

The autumn/winter vaccination programme 2025/2026 for seasonal influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination is due to commence at the beginning of October 2025. The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommend that when a person is eligible for both vaccines, the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered to maximise uptake.

Influenza vaccination programme autumn/winter 2025/2026

Annual influenza vaccination is strongly recommended for those aged 60 years and older, those with underlying conditions that increase the risk of serious illness, all children aged 2-17 years, all pregnant women, and all healthcare workers. Ideally, the influenza vaccine should be given early in the influenza season.

Influenza vaccines available

Two types of influenza vaccines will be available for 2025/2026 HSE seasonal influenza vaccination programme.

1. Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV): **Fluenz nasal spray suspension** manufactured by Astra Zeneca. This is a trivalent vaccine that is recommended for all children aged 2 to 17 years. It is packed in boxes of 10 applicators.
2. Inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) – trivalent. This is an injectable inactivated egg-based trivalent influenza vaccine. Two brands of this vaccine will be supplied – **Influvac sub-unit** (manufactured by Mylan) and **Vaxigrip** (manufactured by Sanofi). Both vaccines are packed in boxes of 10 prefilled syringes. IIV is licensed for those 6 months of age and older and is recommended for eligible populations, including children (aged 2 to 17 years) who have contraindications to LAIV.

Eligible groups for 2025/2026 HSE influenza vaccination programme

- All aged 60 years and older
- All those aged 18 years and older living in residential care facilities for older people and other long stay facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow the introduction of infection
- All aged 6 months and older who is at increased risk of influenza related complications:
 - Cancer, Chronic heart disease, Chronic kidney disease, Chronic liver disease, Chronic neurological disease, Chronic respiratory disease, Diabetes and other metabolic disorders, including inherited metabolic disorders, Haemoglobinopathies, immunocompromise due to disease or treatment, Body mass index $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$, Serious mental health conditions, Children and adults with Down syndrome, Children with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders, Children on long term aspirin therapy
- All children and young people aged 2 to 17 years
- All healthcare workers
- All pregnant women (at any stage of pregnancy)
- Carers and household contacts of people at increased risk of influenza related complications
- People with close, regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl

COVID-19 vaccination programme autumn/winter 2025/2026

The aim of the COVID-19 vaccine programme is to offer year-round protection against severe disease in those that are at increased risk of hospitalisation, ICU admissions and death from SARS-CoV-2 infection. To achieve this aim, vaccination once per year is recommended for most at-risk individuals. For those in whom immunity wanes more quickly, twice-yearly vaccination is required.



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COVID-19 vaccine available

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee recommend antigenically updated COVID-19 mRNA vaccines for the autumn/winter programme in 2025/2026. The vaccines available for all age preparations will be Comirnaty LP.8.1 manufactured by Pfizer. For those aged 12 years and older the vaccine is **Comirnaty LP.8.1 30 micrograms. This is multidose vial with a grey cap containing 6 doses.**

Groups recommended to get a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2025/2026

- All aged 60 years and older
- All aged 18 years and older living in a long term care facility for older adults
- All aged 6 months and older with immunocompromise associated with a suboptimal response to vaccination
- All aged 6 months and older with a medical condition associated with a higher risk of hospitalisation, severe disease or death due to COVID-19:
 - Cancer, Chronic heart disease, Chronic kidney disease, Chronic liver disease, Chronic neurological disease, Chronic respiratory disease, Diabetes and other metabolic disorders, including inherited metabolic disorders, Haemoglobinopathies, Body mass index $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$, Serious mental health conditions, Children and adults with Down syndrome, Children with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders

Healthcare workers and pregnant women who are in the groups listed above are recommended to get a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2025/2026. Anyone aged over 18 years who is not in any of the groups listed above, can get a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2025/2026 if they choose to, following discussion with a healthcare provider. There should be at least a **3 month interval** between the last COVID-19 vaccine or the last COVID-19 infection before getting vaccinated.

Outside of the autumn/winter COVID-19 vaccination programme, COVID-19 vaccines should also be available where clinically indicated, including but not limited to pregnancy, previously unvaccinated, or new period of immunosuppression.

Vaccine ordering for influenza and COVID-19

Vaccine orders will open on week commencing 8th September 2025 with first deliveries to sites between 15th and 29th September 2025. Vaccines should be ordered online (www.ordervaccines.ie) from the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) as per delivery calendar and before cut-off time. You must ensure an order is placed before the cut off time on your delivery calendar as emergency deliveries cannot be facilitated. All vaccine deliveries are fortnightly. Please plan your clinics accordingly

Once NCCS communicates that orders are open, you can order:

- Up to 100% of your IIV allocation, based on previous influenza seasons, with fortnightly deliveries commencing in mid-September as per your delivery calendar
- Up to 75% of your Fluenz nasal spray suspension (LAIV) allocation, based on previous influenza seasons, and, if applicable, planned schools vaccinations communicated to the HSE. The remaining 25% of your allocation will be available to order at the end of October if required. Fortnightly deliveries commence in mid September as per your delivery calendar. Due to the short shelf life of this vaccine, it must be ordered on a fortnightly basis, with quantities based on planned appointments.
- Up to 40% of your COVID-19 vaccine allocation, based on previous seasons. The remaining quantities will be available to be order from second ordering cycle. Fortnightly deliveries of Comirnaty vaccines will commence in mid-September as per your delivery calendar.
- For all vaccines, please only order the amount of vaccine that can reasonably be expected to be used before your next vaccine delivery. Further vaccines will be available to order with subsequent deliveries. No more than 3 weeks stock of vaccines should be held at any time

The HSE mobile vaccination teams will order influenza vaccine required for Long-Term Residential Care Facilities (including nursing homes) therefore these sites have been advised not to order influenza vaccines for residents.



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Fridge capacity

Before placing orders for influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, please ensure that you have removed all expired vaccines from your fridge (and return to NCCS in the normal way) and that you have the capacity to safely store all vaccines that are ordered. Vaccines must be stored correctly and if vaccines are being transported off site, the [HSE Guideline for maintaining the vaccine cold-chain in vaccine cool boxes](#) must be adhered to.

Record cards and other resources

Patient held vaccination record cards for IIV and post vaccination (tear-pad) leaflets for LAIV will be delivered with the vaccine, which should be completed and given to your patients after vaccination. LAIV Resources and Toolkit will be available for the 2025/2026 programme. LAIV packs will be available to order for GPs and Pharmacies participating in LAIV Schools Programme. These packs will become available to order from healthpromotion.ie this will be closer to vaccine stock delivery date. Please note that orders will be limited and aligned to LAIV stock ordering.

Children's LAIV (Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine) Primary Schools Programme

GPs and Pharmacists are reminded to provide the HSE with details of the primary schools where they have agreed to offer LAIV onsite during the 2025/26 season, using the forms provided at [LAIV Schools Programme Planning 2025/2026](#). Details of the primary school Roll Number and Eircode for each participating school will be required.

Stock allocation of LAIV to GPs and Pharmacies for school-based vaccination will be based on the information provided on the planning forms.

Key resources

The following key resources will be available closer to the launch date for the programme:

- Information for healthcare professionals including digital versions of the leaflet and consent forms will be available on www.immunisation.ie
- Resources will be available to order from healthpromotion.ie
- E-learning modules on LAIV and IIV and COVID-19 vaccines will be available on www.hseland.ie
- The updated NIAC chapters for influenza and COVID-19 are available:
https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/NIAC/Immunisation_Guidelines/Chapter_05a_COVID-19.pdf
https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/NIAC/Immunisation_Guidelines/Chapter_11_Influenza.pdf

Recording vaccine administration

GP patient management systems and the HSE PharmaVax and GPVax system enables COVID-19, influenza and PPV23 vaccination records from GPs and Pharmacists to transmit electronically from their software to NIIS (formerly called COVAX). As there are many providers of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, it is essential that all vaccines given are recorded accurately and promptly, so that clinical records are kept up to date and two doses are not administered in error. This includes when children are vaccinated with LAIV in school or primary care settings. Vaccination status should also be checked before administering vaccines.

Sometimes the data messages coming from the source systems may not communicate correctly or the data entered may not be fully complete. In order to clarify and address data issues, the National Immunisation Office (NIO) will work with HSELive to seek clarification. This will mean that vaccinators may receive a phone call from HSELive to clarify data items. HSELive is part of the HSE and the team work closely with the NIO to seek clarification to resolve data quality (DQ) issues. There is dedicated line for GP's and Pharmacies to ring HSELive, in relation to DQ issues which is: 01 2408786.

Actions required by you

- ✓ Please remove all expired vaccines including 2024/2025 influenza season vaccines and place them in a box with completed returns form, store securely until returned to the HSE National Cold Chain Service van driver.
- ✓ Vaccine deliveries will be fortnightly from mid-September once the order has been placed in time as per your calendar. Ensure you have adequate pharmaceutical fridge space for arriving vaccines.
- ✓ Additionally, all professionals vaccinating must ensure that they have undertaken all relevant training that is required for their profession
- ✓ All vaccines should be administered aligned with the advice of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC).



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- ✓ It is essential that informed consent is obtained prior to vaccination aligned with the [HSE national consent policy](#).
- ✓ Vaccine expiry dates should be checked prior to vaccine administration.
- ✓ Any adverse reaction following vaccine administration should be reported to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) <https://www.hpra.ie/report-an-issue/medicines-for-human-use>

I would like once again to express my thanks to General Practitioners and Pharmacists and their teams for their participation in and support of the influenza and COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lucy Jessop

Consultant in Public Health Medicine – National Immunisation Lead
National Immunisation Office MRCN 424447



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Appendix 1: Summary of groups recommended to receive influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in autumn/winter 2025/2026

Groups	Influenza vaccine	COVID-19 vaccine
≥60 years	Recommended for all	Recommended for all
2 to 17 years	Recommended for all	Recommended for those with immunocompromise or with an underlying medical condition
18 years and older living in long term care facilities for older adults	Recommended for all ¹	Recommended for all
6 months and older with immunocompromise²	Recommended for all	Recommended for all
6 months and older with an underlying medical risk factor²	Recommended for all	Recommended for all
Pregnancy	Recommended for all	Recommended if in another risk group ³ Available in each pregnancy for those who choose to receive a vaccine
Healthcare workers (HCWs)	Recommended for all	Recommended if in another risk group ⁴ Available in autumn/winter 2025/2026 for all HCWs who choose to receive a vaccine
Carers and household contacts of people with underlying chronic health conditions⁵	Recommended for all	Not recommended unless in another risk group ⁴
People with close, regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl	Recommended for all	Not recommended unless in another risk group ⁴
Adults aged 18-59 years without underlying medical risk factors	Not recommended	One dose should be available each year for those who choose to receive a vaccine following discussion with a healthcare provider

¹An influenza vaccine is also recommended for those aged 18 years and older living in other long stay facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow the introduction of infection

²As defined in the NIAC chapters; COVID-19 Chapter 5a and influenza Chapter 11 (and outlined in the table below)

³One COVID-19 vaccine dose is recommended in each pregnancy for those with immunocompromise or with medical conditions associated with severe COVID-19 infection as defined in the NIAC COVID-19 Chapter 5a and outlined in the table below). Please note that this recommendation is not just seasonal, a COVID-19 vaccine should be available at any time of the year. It can be given at any stage of pregnancy but ideally between 20 and 34 weeks' gestation

⁴Risk groups as defined in Chapter 5a of the NIAC Guidelines (i.e. 60 years and older, those with immunocompromise and those with a medical risk factor/underlying medical condition are recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2025/2026)

⁵As defined in NIAC Influenza Chapter 11: A carer is someone who provides ongoing significant level of care to a person who is in need of care in the home due to illness or disability or frailty. Medical risk factors/Underlying health conditions are listed in the table below.

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Medical risk factor/underlying medical condition

Medical risk factor influenza*	Medical risk factor COVID**
Cancer	Cancer
Chronic heart disease	Chronic heart disease
Chronic kidney disease	Chronic kidney disease
Chronic liver disease	Chronic liver disease
Chronic neurological disease	Chronic neurological disease
Chronic respiratory disease	Chronic respiratory disease
Diabetes and other metabolic disorders, including inherited metabolic disorders	Diabetes and other metabolic disorders included inherited metabolic disorders
Haemoglobinopathies	Haemoglobinopathies
Immunocompromise due to disease or treatment	Immunocompromise due to disease or treatment
Body mass index $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$	Body mass index $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$
Serious mental health conditions	Serious mental health conditions
Children and adults with Down syndrome	Children and adults with Down syndrome
Children with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders	-
Children on long term aspirin therapy	-

**This list is not exhaustive, and the medical practitioner should apply clinical judgment to consider the risk of influenza exacerbating any medical condition that a patient may have, as well as the risk of serious illness from influenza.*

***This list is not exhaustive, and the medical practitioner should apply clinical judgment to consider the risk of COVID-19 infection exacerbating any medical condition that a patient may have as well as the risk of serious illness from COVID-19 infection.*