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T: 021 4928787

Date: 27th August 2026

Reference: NCO-33-2026

Autumn / Winter Vaccination Programme 2026/2027

Dear Doctor,

The autumn / winter vaccination programme 2026/2027 for COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination is due to commence at the beginning of October 2026. It is aimed, where possible, to provide for co-administration of both vaccines at the same time for eligible individuals. Please refer to pages 4-7 for comprehensive information from the National Immunisation Office on the upcoming vaccination programme.

Influenza Vaccination Programme
Details of the Influenza Vaccination Programme and eligibility for the HSE free flu vaccine for 2026/27 is appended to this letter.

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

Thank you to all GPs who submitted school lists by 30th June 2026. Please notify us if any changes or amendments to returned school submissions at gpvaccines@vision.com. Details of the LAIV primary schools programme are set out in NCO-17-2026. Stock allocation of Fluenz nasal spray suspension to GPs for school-based vaccination will be based on the information provided to the HSE on the LAIV schools templates.

GPs are reminded that there is a further opportunity to submit school lists **between 1st and 25th September 2026** via the online form at LAIV Primary Schools Programme 2026/2027. Additional stock allocations for these schools will not be available until mid to late October, so providers should not plan to visit these schools until after the mid-term break.

Details of Primary Schools that have not yet been notified to the HSE can be made available to GPs for their local area on request to gpvaccines@vision.com.

LAIV Resources

- The LAIV Toolkit will be available in early September for the 2026/2027 vaccination programme.
- LAIV school packs (Consent form, LAIV leaflet, LAIV Factsheet. Information letter) are available to order for GPs and Pharmacies participating in the administration of LAIV in Schools 2026/27 from healthpromotion.ie.
- Updates and resources including toolkit, digital versions of the leaflet and consent forms will be available from NIO in due course.

Information for healthcare professionals is available at National Immunisation Office. For any clinical queries contact immunisation@hse.ie

COVID-19 Vaccination 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 COVID-19 and Flu vaccine services as follows:

- Eligible residents in long-term care facilities for older adults
- Those eligible who are housebound. Note there are new email addresses for housebound referrals see housebound referral pathway.
- Eligible in-patients in acute hospitals
- COVID-19 vaccination for eligible persons in the custody of the Irish Prison Service (IPS)
- COVID-19 vaccinations for those aged under 12 years

Updates and Resources
The **Operational Guidance** for Vaccination in General Practice is available at Operational guidance for vaccination in General Practice

GP Practice Management System (PMS)/GPVax
Details of system updates will be communicated by your system vendor, or in the case of GPVax, included in the most recent version of the GPVax User Guide, which is circulated to all registered users via Healthmail after each update.

A key change for this autumn / winter programme is the consolidation and alignment of the Risk Factors for COVID-19, Flu and Pneumococcal. The fields referenced as 'Risk Factor' for flu and pneumococcal, and the field referenced 'Allocation group' in PMS for COVID-19 will be re-labelled as 'Indications for Vaccination'. GPVax will have a new Indications for Vaccination field for COVID-19. Vaccinators should select multiple indications where applicable. For flu, there will be a standalone question in relation to Health Care Workers, which will only be applicable for patients aged between 16 and 69 years. Where this question is answered 'Yes', it will not be mandatory to select an additional Indication for Vaccination, although additional indications can be selected if applicable.

The immunocompromised assessment for COVID-19 will be simplified to a Yes / No response, to indicate the patient immunocompromised status at time of vaccination.

These changes will go live in GPVax and Complete GP PMS on **1st September 2026** and in the GP PMS Socrates, Helix and HealthOne on **1st October 2026**.

In line with these updates, the corrections facility will also be limited to records created from 1st January 2026 onwards. **If a GP needs to make corrections to any records created before 1st January 2026, these must be entered by 31st August 2026**.

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

- Guidance Note 1 COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccine Consumables and Information Resources
- Guidance Note 2 Completing Vaccination Record on IT Systems

Conclusion

I would like to express my sincere thanks to General Practitioners and their teams for your continued support in the provision of COVID-19 and Influenza vaccinations in the Autumn / Winter Campaign and for your valuable contribution to the LAIV Schools Programme. I wish you and your team every success with the upcoming campaign.

Yours sincerely,



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

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NIO.26.08.26.01 August 2026

Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccination Programme 2026/2027

Dear Doctor/Pharmacist,

The autumn/winter vaccination programme 2026/2027 for seasonal influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination is due to commence at the beginning of October 2026. 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 2026/2027

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 to 17 years, all pregnant women, and all healthcare workers. Ideally, the influenza vaccine should be given early in the influenza season, before influenza begins to spread in our communities.

Influenza vaccines available

The 2026/2027 HSE seasonal flu vaccination programme will offer **four** influenza vaccines:

- A Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (**LAIV**), a nasal spray influenza vaccine called **Fluenz** supplied by AstraZeneca recommended by NIAC for children aged 2 to 17 years
- An adjuvanted (**enhanced**) inactivated influenza vaccine **(aIIV)** called **Fluad** supplied by Seqirus. This is an injectable vaccine recommended by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) **only for those aged 65 years and older.**
- **Standard** inactivated influenza vaccines **(IIV)** called **Influvac** supplied by Viatris, or **Vaxigrip** supplied by Sanofi. IIVs are injectable influenza vaccines for:
    - All adults aged 60-64 years
    - Children aged 6 months to less than 2 years, children aged 2 to 17 years with a contraindication to receiving LAIV, and adults aged 18-59 in eligible groups

Eligible groups for 2026/2027 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 are 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 ≥ 40kg/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 waterfowl

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COVID-19 vaccination programme autumn/winter 2026/2027

The aim of the COVID-19 vaccination programme is to offer year-round protection against severe disease in those that are at increased risk of hospitalisation, ICU admission 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 recommended.

COVID-19 vaccine available

NIAC recommend antigenically updated COVID-19 mRNA vaccines for the autumn/winter programme in 2026/2027. The vaccine available for all age groups will be Comirnaty XFG manufactured by Pfizer. For those aged 12 years and older the vaccine is **Comirnaty XFG 30 micrograms.**

Groups recommended to get a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2026/2027

- 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 ≥ 40kg/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 2026/2027. Anyone aged over 18 years who is not in any of the groups listed above, can get a COVID-19 vaccine 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 in eligible groups, or those commencing a new period of immunosuppression.

Vaccine ordering for influenza and COVID-19

The HSE encourages you to vaccinate the most vulnerable patient groups first. Vaccine orders for adjuvanted (**enhanced**) inactivated influenza vaccine **(aIIV)** or **Fluad** and **LAIV** will open on week commencing **7th September** with first deliveries to sites from **14th September 2026** onwards. Vaccines should be ordered online (www.ordervaccines.ie) from the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) as per delivery calendar. 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 adjuvanted (enhanced) aIIV allocation, based on previous influenza seasons.
- 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 before 30th June 2026. The remainder of your allocation will be available to order at the end of October if required. Customers who register with the HSE during the 2nd window in Sept 2026 to vaccinate in schools will be able to order mid-late October. 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.

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- 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

- **Standard IIV** is estimated to be **available for ordering from the last week of September**. You can order up to 50% of your total allocation at this time with further supplies being available at the end of October. Due to manufacturing challenges, not all standard IIV will be available at the start of the vaccination season, so it is important that only individuals who meet the NIAC recommendations are offered this vaccine, with those at highest risk prioritised.

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.

Vaccine stock management

Before placing orders for influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, please ensure that you have removed all expired vaccines as well as all Comirnaty LP.8.1, regardless of expiry date, from your fridge and return to NCCS in the normal way). Please be aware that for COVID-19 vaccines, you should refer to the USE BEFORE date on the box and not the manufacturer's expiry date on the vial. A vaccine given after this USE BEFORE date and time is an expired vaccine. Always store Comirnaty vaccine in its original box as the USE BEFORE label is only on the box and not on the vial.

Before placing orders, please ensure 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 injectable influenza vaccines 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 2026/2027 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 closer to vaccine stock delivery date. Please note that orders will be limited and aligned to LAIV stock ordering.

Key resources

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

- Information for healthcare professionals will be available on https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/information-healthcare-workers/national-immunisation-office/
- Resources will be available to order from healthpromotion.ie
- E-learning modules on LAIV and injectable influenza vaccines (aIIV 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

As there are many providers of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, it is essential that all vaccines given are recorded accurately. **Records of vaccine administration should be entered at the time of vaccination so that clinical records are kept up to date.** This will avoid the potential for two doses of the same vaccine to be administered in error. This includes when children are vaccinated with LAIV in school or in primary care settings. **Vaccination status must be checked before administering vaccines** to ensure that a dose of the vaccine has not been administered previously during the season.

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

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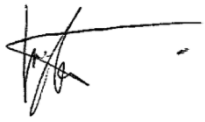
with HSELive to seek clarification. This will mean that vaccinators may receive a phone call from HSELive to clarify data items. HSELive is part of the HSE and the team work closely with the NIO to seek clarification to resolve data quality (DQ) issues. There is dedicated line for GP's and Pharmacies to ring HSELive, in relation to DQ issues which is: 01 2408786.

Actions required by you

- ✓ Please remove all expired vaccines including previous seasons' influenza and COVID-19 vaccine stock and place them in a box with completed returns form, store securely until returned to the HSE National Cold Chain Service van driver.
- ✓ Please ensure that all older variant COVID-19 vaccines used for previous campaigns are removed.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Plan your vaccination clinics in line with expected vaccine delivery volumes and timing. Emergency deliveries cannot be facilitated.
- ✓ 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 HSE eligible groups and advice of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC).
- ✓ 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
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