Frequently Asked Questions

Making your flu appointment

When does the flu programme run?

The flu vaccination programme runs from early October. ~~through to February next year.~~

Due to the increase in demand and increase in number of groups eligible for the free flu vaccination, appointments are being allocated in a phased approach over the coming months.

 When might I expect my letter inviting me to make my flu vaccination appointment?

Letters are being sent out in batches by NHSScotland to priority eligible groups over a period of 8-10 weeks, starting from mid-September.

 What should I do when I receive the letter?

Only people who have received a letter asking them to book an appointment should contact NHS Fife. Please follow the contact details information in the letter and if emailing, please only do so once and we will get back to you.

 I have not received my letter, but I always get my flu vaccination

You should receive a letter over the coming weeks, letters are being issued nationally in batches to eligible groups, Please only arrange to book your flu vaccination after you have received your letter inviting you to do so.

 The phone keeps ringing out, what should I do?

As widely reported, the response to the first phase of the flu vaccination process overwhelmed our established systems and we have apologised for the inconvenience and anxiety caused.

NHS Fife has now put additional measures in place to address the increase in demand and we are currently working through the backlog of calls and emails. We will respond to all emails and message over the coming weeks.

If you can, please email us. If you do not have access to email and cannot get through on the phone line, please be patient with us and try again later at a less busy time; there are enough appointments and vaccine to go round.

Please do not call or email multiple times – we will get back to your email or message.

 I sent in an email when I received my letter, but I have still not had a reply – what should I do?

Please do not send multiple emails; we will get back to you. We appreciate your patience and understanding at this time.

 Will the main NHS Fife switchboard be able to direct my call to the booking number or make my flu vaccination appointment?

No. Please phone or email the contact details in your letter. Do not call the main NHS Fife switchboard as they will not be able to make an appointment for you and you may also prevent other urgent calls being able to get through.

 Should I contact my local GP practice for my appointment, like last year?

No, due to social distancing requirements, most GP practices are not able to offer the same number of appointments and flu clinics as in previous years. To find out more visit [NHS Inform](https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/flu-vaccine#overview).

 Should I make an appointment to get my primary school age child vaccinated?

No, as in previous years, local health teams will visit primary schools to offer the vaccination to all primary school aged children. Details [found here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns/seasonal-flu-vaccination-programme/school-flu-vaccination-programme/).

 What are the vaccination arrangements for those living and working in care homes in Fife?

For those living in and working in care homes, along with those receiving care at home and the elderly, local NHS Boards are making arrangements for vaccinations to take place in the home.

Planning for your vaccination

 I’ve got an appointment but its weeks away. Don’t I need this jab now?

The vaccination period runs into December. We have prioritised appointments by clinical need, based on national guidance. This year, the flu vaccination delivery programme started two weeks early, so there is still time to ensure that those that are eligible are vaccinated before the flu circulation period.

 Where will my appointment be?

The location will vary depending on your individual circumstances and location. The person booking your appointment will be able to advise.

 Can I just turn up at a community vaccination hub to get my flu jab?

All flu vaccination is by appointment only so please don’t turn up unless you have an appointment.

 I have mobility issues; will I be able to access the clinic?

When booking your flu appointment, please let your call handler know if you have any accessibility issues that need to be taken into consideration.

 Will it be safe to go to a local hub or cluster clinic?

Yes. During vaccination, strict infection prevention and control measures will be in place, with enhanced cleaning of venues, strict social distancing, hand cleaning stations and staff will be wearing appropriate PPE.

 Should I wear a face covering?

Yes - please wear a face covering while travelling to and from and during your appointment unless you are exempt.

 How should I travel to my appointment – under increased restrictions?

The Scottish Government have acknowledged that attending your flu vaccination appointment is deemed as essential travel. If you can drive yourself by car, you should consider this in the first instance, but if this option is not available to you then please use public transport.

 Should I car share to get to my appointment?

The Scottish Government are advising against car sharing with people outside your own household - unless there is no alternative. If there is no alternative to car sharing with members of another household then everyone in the car should follow the advice from Transport Scotland:

* keep your distance and take care entering and exiting the vehicle
* sit as far apart as possible in the vehicle, avoiding face-to-face
* maintain good ventilation by keeping the car windows open
* wear a face-covering, unless you are exempt
* clean your hands before and after your journey
* clean the door handles and other areas that people touch.

 If I am not feeling well or have any of the COVID-19 symptoms what should I do?

If you have a temperature, persistent cough or loss of taste and smell before your vaccination, please contact us to reschedule your appointment.

 When should I arrive for my appointment?

Please arrive on time for your appointment and not too early. Due to physical distancing requirements we are limited to how many people are allowed into buildings, so if you arrive to earlier for your appointment you may be asked to queue outside.

 What should I wear to my appointment?

Please dress for the weather as you may be required to wait outside for a short period before you can enter the venue. If you can wear loose-sleeved or short sleeved clothing under your outer wear that will help the vaccinators administer the vaccine quicker.

 Can I bring someone with me to my appointment?

Wherever possible, please attend on your own, unless you require assistance.

 I am over 65 and have been struggling to get through on the phoneline, is my call logged even though I can't get through or leave a message?

We apologies for the inconvenience and frustration caused, our phonelines have been overwhelmed by the volume of calls. If you are not able to get through to leave a message, please can we ask you to hang-up and call back later. Alternatively, if you have access to email, you may wish to consider emailing us to arrange your appointment.

 I have recently emailed for an appointment and have not had a response, what should I do?

If you have emailed us, your email will be logged, and we will get back to you. Please be patient, we will get back to you in due course. Please do not resubmit emails as this adds to the backlog of requests and you may be asked to submit the same information you have already provided.

 I am under 65 with an eligible health condition and have just received my letter inviting me to make an appointment, what should I do?

We are asking all under 65s with an eligible health condition not to arrange to make an appointment until after Monday 19th October, when more information and guidance will be available on the [NHS Inform website](https://nhsinform.scot/flu), this is to allow us to address the backlog of over 65 appointments. Please be assured that there are enough appointments available during October, November, and December

 What does NHSScotland define as an eligible health condition?

Please visit [NHS Inform](https://www.nhsinform.scot/flu) for the latest guidance.

 ~~Why is my GP not delivering my vaccination this year, I never had a problem getting an appointment in the past!~~

~~More than a third of the Fife population are eligible to be vaccinated this year and this would not have been possible for our GPs to do with the impact of COVID-19 physical distancing and capacity.~~ Duplication

 My GP has told me to call NHS Fife Patient Relations to make my appointment, is this correct?

No, please do not call our Patient Relations Team for help in booking your flu appointment, the team are not able to book appointments on your behalf.

 My friend has been allocated an appointment before me, even though I made my appointment before them

Appointments are allocated based on several factors including clinical need, geographical location, and daily capacity.

 I am worried about the number of people being asked to attend a community clinic, will it be safe?

The vaccination clinics are being held at community venues across the Kingdom. Moving to larger venues is essential to ensure that the appropriate physical distancing and infection prevention measures can be put in place to protect those attending and the healthcare staff running the clinics.

 Am I allowed to travel to my flu clinic appointment using public transport?

Travelling to get your flu vaccination is regarded as essential travel by the Scottish Government. When using public transport please follow the guidelines on face covering and physical distancing.

 Where will my vaccination appointment be?

NHS Fife has taken steps to make our vaccination clinics and hubs as accessible as possible, with over 65’s offered an appointment at their nearest cluster clinic.

 Is there car parking available at clinic locations?

The vaccination clinics are being held at a range of community venues across the Kingdom. Car parking will be available near or at the location. Please check in advance when your appointment is allocated for local parking capacity and arrangements.

 Should I self-isolate if I experience side-effects of the vaccination?

If someone develops fever post vaccination, this would normally be within the first 48 hours following vaccination AND usually resolve within 48 hours. This is a relatively common, expected reaction, and self-isolation and testing for COVID-19 are not required unless COVID is suspected based on other clinical criteria such as cough and/or anosmia.

If fever starts beyond 48 hours post vaccination OR persists beyond 48 hours or an individual develops other COVID-19 related symptoms, then they should self-isolate and be recommended to have a test for COVID-19. Testing for COVID-19 may also be considered at any time following clinical assessment, or if there are other epidemiological indications such as being a close contact of a case or part of a cluster.