

COHORTS: Group 6:

All individuals aged 16 to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality, who are not on the shielding list are being offered the vaccine as part of group 6. These people are being identified by a modified version of the flu vaccine list.

The table below lists the health conditions which may mean people aged 16 and over are at higher risk of serious disease and mortality from COVID-19, meaning they should take their vaccination when it is offered to them. People under 16 are not currently being invited for vaccinations.

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| <p>Chronic respiratory disease</p> | <p>Severe lung conditions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission (patients who are well controlled on asthma inhalers are not eligible in priority group 6 for coronavirus vaccination) • chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) including chronic bronchitis and emphysema bronchiectasis • cystic fibrosis • interstitial lung fibrosis • pneumoconiosis • bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD) |
| <p>Chronic heart disease and vascular disease</p> | <p>Conditions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • congenital heart disease • hypertension with cardiac complications • chronic heart failure • individuals requiring regular medication and/or follow-up for ischaemic heart disease • atrial fibrillation • peripheral vascular disease • venous thromboembolism |

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| Chronic kidney disease | Conditions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic kidney disease at stage 3, 4 or 5 • chronic kidney failure • nephrotic syndrome • kidney transplantation |
| Chronic liver disease | Conditions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cirrhosis • biliary atresia • chronic hepatitis |
| Chronic neurological disease | Conditions such as: <p>stroke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transient ischaemic attack (TIA) • conditions in which respiratory function may be compromised due to neurological disease (e.g. polio syndrome sufferers) • cerebral palsy • learning disabilities • Down's Syndrome • multiple sclerosis • epilepsy • dementia • Parkinson's disease • motor neurone disease and related or similar conditions • hereditary and degenerative disease of the nervous system or muscles • severe neurological disability |
| Diabetes mellitus | Any diabetes, including diet-controlled diabetes. |

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| <p>Immunosuppression</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions or treatments such as: • immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including patients undergoing chemotherapy leading to immunosuppression • undergoing radical radiotherapy • solid organ transplant recipients • bone marrow or stem cell transplant recipients • HIV infection at all stages • multiple myeloma or genetic disorders affecting the immune system (e.g. IRAK-4, NEMO, complement disorder, SCID) • receiving immunosuppressive or immunomodulating biological therapy including, but not limited to anti-TNF, alemtuzumab, ofatumumab and rituximab • receiving protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors • being treated with steroid-sparing agents such as cyclophosphamide and mycophenolate mofetil • being treated with or likely to be treated with systemic steroids for more than a month at a dose equivalent to prednisolone at 20mg or more per day for adults • This also includes: • anyone with a history of haematological malignancy, including leukaemia, lymphoma, and myeloma • anyone with systemic lupus erythematosus and rheumatoid arthritis, • anyone with psoriasis who may require long term immunosuppressive treatments |
| <p>Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen</p> | <p>This also includes conditions that may lead to splenic dysfunction, such as homozygous sickle cell disease, thalassemia major and coeliac syndrome.</p> |
| <p>Morbid obesity</p> | <p>Adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than or equal to 40.</p> |
| <p>Severe mental illness</p> | <p>Conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or any mental illness that causes severe functional impairment.</p> |

Also included within priority group 6 are the following:

Younger adults in long-stay nursing and residential care settings:

Many younger adults in residential care settings will be eligible for the coronavirus vaccine because they fall into one of the clinical risk groups (for example learning disabilities). Given the likely high risk of exposure in these settings, vaccination of the whole resident population is recommended.

Younger residents in care homes for the elderly will also be at a higher risk of exposure. Although they may be at lower risk of mortality than older residents, they will have been offered the coronavirus vaccine at the same time as other residents in care homes for older people.

Unpaid carers:

Unpaid carers aged 16 to 64 are now beginning to be offered vaccination alongside adults with eligible at-risk health conditions (priority group 6). Those unpaid carers aged 65 and over should have been offered the vaccine earlier in priority groups 2 to 5.

The Scottish Government is using the definition for an unpaid carer as set out in the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 however for the purposes of vaccinations this will not cover those who provide only remote care.

Some NHS boards are now beginning to call forward a limited number of carers identified through GP systems and social security data of those on relevant benefits, as vaccine supply allows. Carers do not have to do anything at this time if they have not received their appointment letter, are not on benefits or if they are not registered with their GP as a carer.

Further information will be available shortly about the forthcoming self-referral system for carers in Scotland which we expect to launch in early March. A dedicated national marketing campaign will be launched alongside the self-referral system to raise awareness and encourage carers to come forward.