



Spring Campaign 2024

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme Update for
Pharmacy

April 2024



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➤ Introduction

The COVID-19 vaccination programmes have now transitioned to an Autumn/Winter Vaccination Campaign and a Spring Campaign, in line with National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) guidance.

Campaign Commencement

- It has been confirmed that the spring booster campaign commences on 22nd April 2024 and will continue until 31st May 2024.
- It is recognised that in some cases, given the timeframe, vaccinations may run into June.
- Ideally all Spring boosters should be completed by 14th June, this will then allow for a sufficient interval period to elapse, to enable those vaccinated to receive their autumn booster.
- HSE will be launching a public information campaign from 19th of April 2024.
- See COVID-19 Spring Booster [Circulars](#)



➤ Eligible Cohorts

- The groups recommended for a COVID-19 spring booster:
 - those aged 80 years and older.
 - those living in long term care facilities for older adults.
 - those aged 5 years and older with immunocompromise associated with a suboptimal response to vaccination.

NIAC also recommend that the spring booster should be made available for those aged 70-79 years who, following discussion with a healthcare provider, request vaccination.

Clinicians are advised to review and align vaccination with current clinical guidance <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/>

(NIAC Guidance on COVID-19).

<https://www.rcpi.ie/Healthcare-Leadership/NIAC/Immunisation-Guidelines-for-Ireland>



➤ Types of Vaccines

Comirnaty® XBB. 1.5.

- Comirnaty® XBB.1.5. is the preferred vaccine for the spring campaign including primary doses and additional doses.
- The schedule of primary doses for healthy individuals and those with immunocompromise has been updated in the latest NIAC guidance.
- The IT System is updated to enable Comirnaty® XBB.1.5
 - Dose 1- single dose for healthy individuals.
 - Dose 2 and Additional doses- for those with immunocompromise will also be facilitated in the systems.



➤ Ordering & Delivery Schedule

Ordering

- The ordering of COVID-19 stock will continue through National Cold Chain Services (NCCS) and the online portal www.ordervaccines.ie
- The delivery schedule is a fortnightly cycle with delivery dates identified in the NCCS calendar within the online portal system.

Consumable (Clinical Packs)

Disposable syringes, needles and pre injection alcohol swabs can be requested through the online portal.

- Tick the “YES” box on the Cold Chain vaccine order platform to receive packs in line with your order volume.
- If sufficient packs are available in your site, tick the “NO” box and none will be delivered.



➤ Direct to Citizen Communications

- Targeted SMS messages to citizens to signpost vaccination options from 24 April
- SMS to eligible cohort:
 - Immunocompromised 12+ years
 - 80+ years
- Communications planned:
 - 5-11 year olds who are IC: Direct calls to parents/guardian



➤ Sample SMS Message

Over 80's

Hi, {FirstName}, age {Age},

As you are over 80, we recommend that you get your COVID-19 spring booster vaccine now to boost your protection.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to reduce your risk of serious COVID-19 illness.

Your GP may be offering these vaccines or you can find a participating pharmacy at [hse.ie/pharmacies](https://www.hse.ie/pharmacies).

Immunocompromised

Hi {FirstName}, age {Age},

If you have a weak immune system, we recommend that you get your COVID-19 spring booster vaccine now to boost your protection.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to reduce your risk of serious COVID-19 illness.

Your GP may be offering these vaccines or you can find a participating pharmacy at [hse.ie/pharmacies](https://www.hse.ie/pharmacies).



➤ Vaccination Training & Education - Pharmacy

Pharmacists who have completed the required training can supply and administer COVID-19 vaccines.

- You can find out more information about training on the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland website www.thepsi.ie/gns/education/Training_for_Pharmacists_Vaccinations.aspx

Training and resources available:

- See COVID-19 Vaccine modules on www.hseland.ie. Vaccinators should complete the relevant modules on HSELand prior to the administration of COVID-19 vaccines. This training will be updated in due course to reflect changes in the NIAC guidance.
- NIAC Chapter 5a COVID-19

<https://www.rcpi.ie/Healthcare-Leadership/NIAC/Immunisation-Guidelines-for-Ireland>



➤ Vaccinations Primary Care Contractors (VPCC)

The Vaccine Programme is supported by the HSE Vaccinations Primary Care Contractors (VPCC) team, who coordinate the service and provide Relationship Management Support to GPs and Community Pharmacists.

Information resources available on the [VPCC webpage](#) to support vaccinators include:

Guidance Note 1: Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccine Consumables

Guidance Note 2: Completing Vaccine Record on IT Systems

Guidance Note 3: Repeat Primary Course Vaccination

Guidance Note 4: Primary Vaccination administered outside the Republic of Ireland

Guidance Note 6: Guidance on COVID-19 vaccination following an allergic reaction

Guidance Note 7: Pharmacy Guidance re a change in GMS number

Guidance Note 8: Guidance on Alternative to Deltoid Vaccination

There is also updated **Operational Guidance** and a section on **FAQ's** to further support vaccination.



➤ HSE Vaccination Teams

For the Spring campaign, HSE Vaccination teams will offer the following vaccination services:

COVID-19 clinics for:

- Children aged 5-11 with Immunocompromise associated with a suboptimal response to vaccination.
- Acute Hospital inpatients.
- Eligible persons in the custody of the Irish Prison Service
- Residents of Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) for Older Persons
- Areas which are underserved by GP and Pharmacy coverage
- Housebound (on GP referral).



➤ Pharmacy Finder

- Community Pharmacies are key in providing easy access and choice to those who require vaccinations. The Pharmacy Finder has been merged to accommodate the co-administration of Flu and COVID-19:

See <https://www2.hse.ie/services/pharmacies-flu-and-covidvaccines/>

- 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.
- The Pharmacy Service Listing form to add/update the pharmacy details is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/pharmacy-servicerequest/>



➤ Recording of Vaccine Administration

- All COVID-19 vaccinations must be entered on HSE PharmaVax, this serves as both a clinical record and triggers payment through PCRS.
- Please note that it is essential to record the administration of all COVID-19 vaccines promptly, to ensure clinical records are kept up to date and two doses are not administered in error.
- Other common data entry errors:
 - Entry of duplicate records
 - Selection of incorrect vaccine name
 - Incorrect batch number
 - Interval errors
- HSE PharmaVax will be updated to reflect current vaccines only with redundant vaccines being removed periodically. Any notifications of vaccine removals will be issued in advance.



➤ Fee Schedule

COVID-19 Vaccine

- The rate to be paid for vaccinations administered by pharmacists will remain at €25 per dose.