



**COVID-19 vaccine  
Information for people who have requested  
a non mRNA COVID-19 vaccine**



## **COVID-19 vaccine**

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The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) has recommended that updated COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are the preferred vaccines for use in the Winter Vaccination Programme.

The **Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine** is the **mRNA vaccine** available in Ireland and is being used in the Winter Vaccination Programme.

If you cannot have or do not want to have an mRNA vaccine, NIAC recommend that a protein subunit vaccine can be used as an alternative vaccine. The preferred alternative vaccine is the antigenically updated **Nuvaxovid JN.1 vaccine (Novavax JN.1 vaccine)**.

However, the **Novavax JN.1 vaccine** is not available in Ireland and it is unlikely to be available during the Winter Vaccination Programme. The HSE is now offering an alternative non mRNA Novavax vaccine called **Novavax XBB.1.5**. The **Novavax XBB.1.5** vaccine is not the most up to date Novavax vaccine, but it is the only non mRNA vaccine that that is available in Ireland. It is a safe and effective vaccine that provides protection against the serious complications of COVID-19 infection, including hospitalisation, intensive care unit (ICU) admission and death.

In the Winter Vaccination Programme you can get a booster dose if you are:

- age 60 and older
- age 18 to 59 living in a long-term care facility
- age 6 months to 59 years with a weak immune system
- age 6 months to 59 years with a condition that puts you at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19
- a healthcare worker
- pregnant

If you are aged 18 to 59 years and not in one of the groups above, you can still request a vaccine. Talk to your GP or pharmacist about your reasons for wanting a booster.

You can get your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine at the same time.



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If you are offered a Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine in Winter Vaccination Programme you have three options:

1. Get the available **Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine** when it is offered
2. Get an mRNA vaccine, the **Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine** (if you do not have a medical reason why you cannot have an mRNA vaccine)
3. Wait for an updated Novavax vaccine to become available in Ireland

The following summary table might be useful to you in being informed about your choices.

| <b>Get the Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine now</b>   | <b>Get an mRNA vaccine (Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine)</b>  | <b>Wait for an antigenically updated Novavax vaccine</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>What are the positives of this option?</b>  |  |  |
| <p>This is the currently available non mRNA vaccine in Ireland.</p> <p>If you are unable to have an mRNA vaccine, getting a <b>Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine</b> will boost your immunity and give you the best available protection against the serious complications of COVID-19.</p> <p>The HSE, the World Health Organization, and the Department of Health recommend getting a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are offered one.</p> | <p>The <b>Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine</b> is the COVID-19 vaccine recommended by NIAC. Most people can safely get this vaccine.</p> <p>Getting this antigenically updated vaccine will boost your immunity and may provide better protection than an <b>XBB.1.5 vaccine</b> against the newer strains of COVID-19 circulating in our community.</p> | <p>Getting an antigenically updated <b>Novavax</b> vaccine e.g., <b>Novavax JN.1</b> will boost your immunity and it may provide better protection than an XBB.1.5 vaccine against the strains of COVID-19 circulating in our community.</p> |
| <b>Get the Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine now</b>   | <b>Get an mRNA vaccine (Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine)</b>  | <b>Wait for an antigenically updated Novavax vaccine</b>   |
| <b>What are the negatives of this option?</b>  |  |  |
| <p><b>Novavax XBB.1.5 vaccine</b> is not the most antigenically updated COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>There may be less protection provided by this vaccine against the strains of COVID-19 circulating in our community. However, it is expected that getting this vaccine will still provide protection against the serious complications of COVID-19.</p>  | <p>You cannot have a <b>Comirnaty JN.1 vaccine</b> if you have been told by a doctor that you should not get an mRNA vaccine or you had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of an mRNA vaccine or any of its ingredients.</p>  | <p><b>Novavax JN.1</b> is not currently available in Ireland.</p> <p>We do not know when this vaccine may be available and it may not be available in Ireland in the Winter Vaccination Programme.</p>                                       |



## COVID-19 vaccine Information for people who have requested a non mRNA COVID-19 vaccine

One COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is recommended in the Winter Vaccination Programme. You should wait at least 3 months since your last COVID-19 infection or vaccination before getting any COVID-19 booster vaccine.

Both mRNA (**Comirnaty JN.1**) and protein subunit (**Novavax XBB.1.5**) vaccines are available free of charge.

### Where to find more information

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) has detailed COVID-19 information from our experts on:

- The vaccines available and who can get them
- How to get vaccinated
- Getting your vaccine after having the disease
- Vaccine doses recommended for you
- Symptoms and testing
- Advice to protect yourself and others

For more information about the vaccine you are being given, you can read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet. This is available for you on the day you get your vaccine, or you can find it on [www.hse.ie/covid19vaccinePIL](http://www.hse.ie/covid19vaccinePIL)

If you have any questions about the vaccine, you can talk to a health professional, like your vaccinator, Doctor, Pharmacist or healthcare team.

You can also call HSELive on Freephone 1800 700 700. Our team are here to help Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm or Saturdays 9am to 5pm.