

# Flu and COVID-19 vaccines and side effects

For people aged 12 years old and over



Easy read








In this booklet, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.

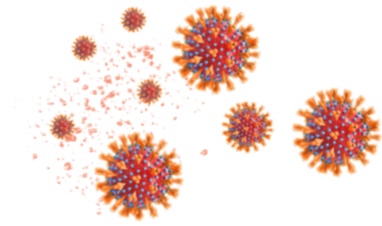


You might need to ask someone to help you read this booklet.

# Contents

	Flu and COVID-19.....	3
	Who will get the vaccines.....	7
	Getting the vaccines.....	9
	Reasons not to get the vaccines .....	12
	Side effects .....	15

# Flu and COVID-19



Flu and COVID-19 are **viruses** that spread easily and can be very serious.

**Viruses** are germs that makes you ill.



The flu and COVID-19 viruses spread

- through the air when people cough or sneeze



- or when you touch places where the virus has landed then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.



Even healthy people can get seriously ill from catching the flu.

# The symptoms of flu and COVID-19

**Symptoms** is the word we use to describe how an illness makes people feel.

Flu and COVID-19 **symptoms** include



- a cough



- sneezing



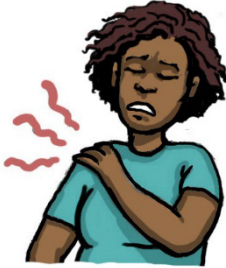
- stuffy or runny nose



- a sore throat



- headache



- sore muscles and joints



- feeling breathless



- fever, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher



- feeling unwell



- you cannot smell or taste like normal



- **chills**

**Chills** are when your body feels cold and you shiver.

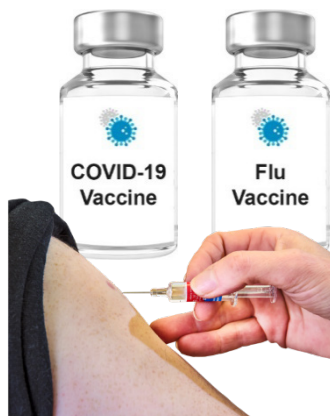


For more information go to this website  
[www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines](http://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines)



Or phone **0800 030 8013**

# Who will get the vaccines



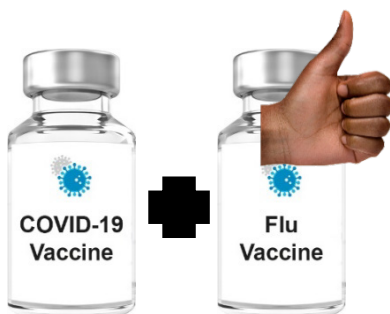
A **vaccine** is a medicine that helps keep people safe and well.

You might hear people talk about a vaccine as a jab or an injection.



NHS Scotland recommends you have the flu and COVID-19 vaccines if you

- are 65 years old or older
- are 12 years old or older and have a health condition
- are 12 years old or older and live with someone with a health condition
- are pregnant
- work in certain places looking after other people
- work or live in a care home for older adults
- are 16 years or older and look after someone as a carer.







You should get the vaccine when you are offered it.



For a full list of who will get the flu and COVID-19 vaccines go to this website  
[www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines](http://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines)



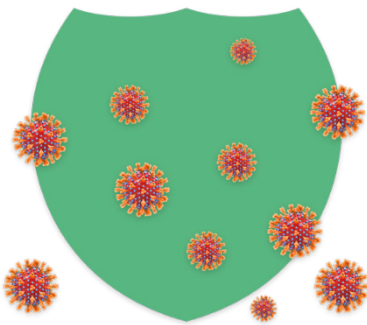
or call **0800 030 8013**.

# Getting the vaccines



The vaccines are given as an **injection** into the top part of your arm.

An **injection** is when you are given medicine using a special needle.



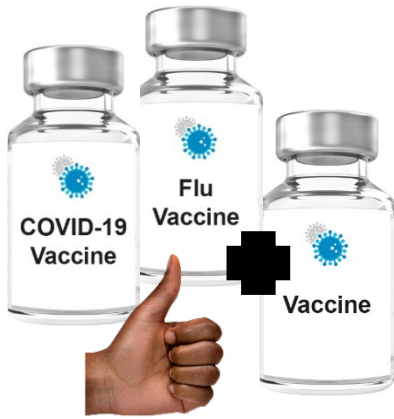
The vaccines help build up your **immunity**.

**Immunity** means your body can protect itself and your symptoms will not be as bad.



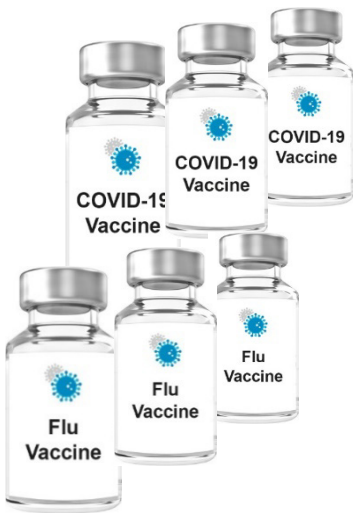
The vaccines are one of the best ways to protect you from flu and COVID-19.

The vaccines mean less people will get very ill if they catch flu or COVID-19.



It is safe to get the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as most other vaccines.

The person giving you your vaccine will talk to about this.



There is more than one type of flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

You will be given one that is right for you.



Wear comfortable clothes and make sure the top of your arm can be reached easily.



If you would like:

- to have the vaccines in a private room
- have extra help
- or a longer appointment



phone the National Vaccination helpline free on **0800 030 8013**.



If you feel very ill on the day of your vaccines get the vaccines another day.



You can make another appointment by going to this website

[www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines](http://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines)



or call **0800 030 8013**.

# Reasons not to get the vaccines



There are some people that will not be able to get the vaccines.

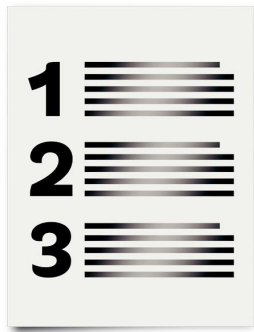


You should not get the flu or COVID-19 vaccines if you have had a very bad **allergic reaction** called anaphylaxis to

- any of the **ingredients** in the vaccines
- either the flu or COVID-19 vaccines you have had before.



An **allergic reaction** is when you get ill because of certain things, like a type of food or a medicine.



**Ingredients** are the different things the vaccine is made of.



Some flu vaccines are made using eggs.



The COVID-19 vaccine does not have any animal products or eggs in it.



You should tell the person giving you the vaccine about any allergic reactions you have had.



To find out the ingredients in the vaccines go to these websites

[www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccineleaflets](http://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccineleaflets)



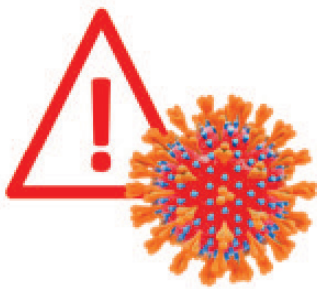
Or phone **0800 030 8013**.

# Side effects



It is normal to get **side effects** after you get your vaccine.

**Side effects** are how a medicine like a vaccine might make you feel after.



The side effects you might get from the vaccines do not make you as ill as getting the flu or COVID-19.



There are **common** side effects of both vaccines.

**Common** means something that happens to a lot people.



# Common side effects

You might get:



- a sore or heavy arm where you got the vaccine



- feel tired



- a headache



- sore muscles



- chills



- feel like you have the flu.



The side effects usually go away in 1 or 2 days.



You can take paracetamol to help yourself feel better.

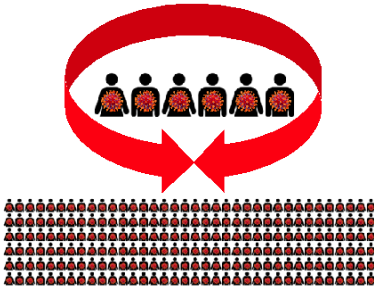


Always read the label on the bottle or packet very carefully.



Never give medicines that contain aspirin to children under 16 years old.

## Uncommon side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine



**Uncommon** means something that does not happen to many people.

You might get **swollen glands** in your armpit or neck on the same side of your body as you got your vaccine.



**Glands** are parts of your body that fight illness.

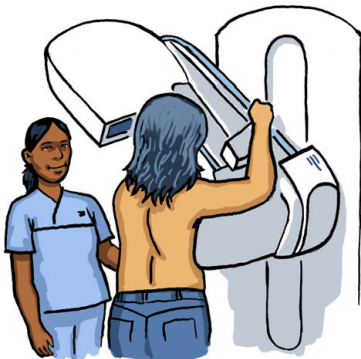
**Swollen** means your glands are bigger and painful to touch.

Day  
10

You might have swollen glands for about 10 days.



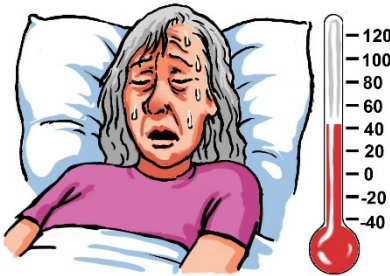
If your swollen glands last for more than 10 days talk to your doctor or health worker.



If you will be having a **mammogram** a few weeks after your COVID-19 vaccine tell the person who is giving you the mammogram.

A **mammogram** is a test to check your breasts are healthy.

# Fever after the vaccines



You might get a fever after you get your vaccines. A fever is temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher.

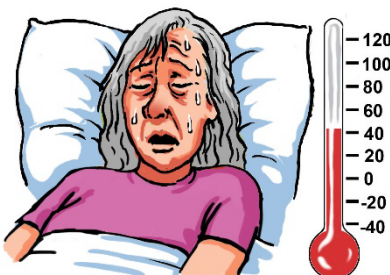


If you get a fever it is normally in the 2 days after you get your vaccines.



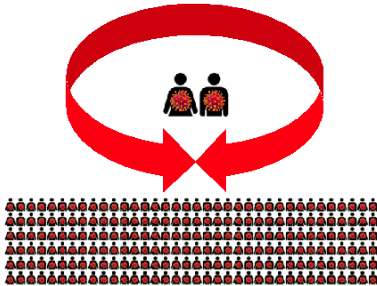
You should talk to your doctor or health worker if your fever:

- lasts for more than 2 days
- starts more than 2 days after you get the vaccines.

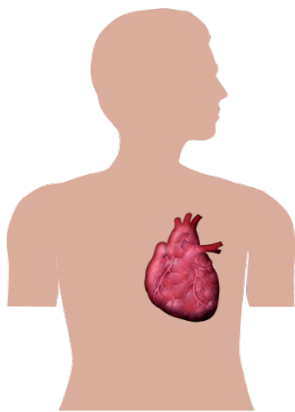


A fever means you might have another infection.

# Very rare side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine



**Rare** means something that happens to only a few people.



Rare cases of **inflammation** of the heart called myocarditis and pericarditis have been reported after the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Inflammation** means the heart gets bigger and weaker.



These cases have been very rare and most people got better quickly.



It is very important that you talk to a doctor straight away if you have any of these side effects after your COVID-19 vaccine

- have a pain in your chest
- find it hard to breathe
- it feels like your heart is beating faster.



There is more information on side effects go to this website

**[www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine/sideeffects](http://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine/sideeffects)**



Or phone **0800 030 8013**.



Call NHS24 on 111 if you are worried about your side effects.

# Reporting side effects

You can report side effects of the vaccines through the Yellow Card scheme.



- go to this website  
**[www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)**



- or phone **0800 731 6789**



- or by using the mobile phone app



- or scan this QR code





You have the right to know how your personal information is used.

For more information about your rights or how the NHS uses your personal information go to these websites



**[www.nhsinform.scot/confidentiality](http://www.nhsinform.scot/confidentiality)**



**[www.nhsinform.scot/data-protection](http://www.nhsinform.scot/data-protection)**



**[www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/  
use-of-your-immunisation-data](http://www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/use-of-your-immunisation-data)**



If you want this booklet in:

- another language
- audio
- BSL
- braille
- large print



email [phs.otherformats@phs.scot](mailto:phs.otherformats@phs.scot)



or visit this website

[www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines](http://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines)



Or phone **0800 030 8013**.



Information in this booklet is correct at the time we wrote it.

All images are copyright of Public Health Scotland  
except for: Photosymbols Ltd (cover, pages 1, 3-7, 9-13, 15-22 and 25)  
and iStock Ltd (pages 3 and 4).

Public Health Scotland is Scotland's national  
agency for improving and protecting the health  
and wellbeing of Scotland's people.

© Public Health Scotland 2023



This publication is licensed for re-use  
under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

For more information, visit

**[www.publichealthscotland.scot/ogl](http://www.publichealthscotland.scot/ogl)**

**[www.publichealthscotland.scot](http://www.publichealthscotland.scot)**

Version 1 1129 & 1132 8/2023