

### **Who can get a booster vaccine?**

- Booster vaccines are now open to everyone over the age of 30.
- From Wednesday 15 December, those aged between 18-29 can book their Covid-19 booster vaccination as long as it has been three months since your second dose.

### **Why do I need to have a booster vaccination?**

- Booster vaccinations are our best defence against Covid-19, particularly with the emergence of the Omicron variant. Omicron is projected to become the dominant variant in the UK by mid-December, based on current trends.
- New data suggest that vaccine protection against mild symptomatic disease from Omicron may be substantially reduced as protection from the original two doses starts to wane. Effectiveness against severe disease is still unknown but expected to be higher.
- A booster is not a top up' - it is a huge increase in your ability to fight the virus. The level of immunoglobulin, the substance that provides immunity by attacking the virus, increases up to 40-fold following a booster.
- Early data shows a third booster dose prevents about 75% of people from getting any Covid symptoms from Omicron.
- Protecting the NHS from being overwhelmed with Covid-19 patients is increasingly important during the winter months and due to the emergence of Omicron.
- The NHS is now set to offer every adult a booster vaccination by the end of the year.

### **Where can I get my Covid-19 booster vaccination?**

- [Pre-bookable appointments](#) are available at large vaccination centres and sites such as a community pharmacies.
- There are also a number of [walk-in clinics](#) offering vaccinations, although you may have to wait to get a jab at these sites.
- Essex County Council has worked with the NHS and a new vaccination centre will be opening at County Hall in Chelmsford on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December.
- This weekend Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) is hosting a Big Vaccination Weekend at Chelmsford City Racecourse. This is a pop-up clinic so appointments must be booked via a separate link [here](#).

### **How do I book my booster vaccine?**

- Pre-booked appointments can be made online at [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#). The website is experiencing high demand at the moment so you may be held in a queue for a short time. Please be patient and keep trying.
- You can also telephone 119.

- A list of walk-in Covid-19 vaccination sites is also available at: [Find a walk-in coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination site - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus/covid-19/vaccination-site).

### **What type of vaccine will I get for my booster?**

- You will most likely receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine as these have been shown to be very effective as boosters, no matter what vaccine you had for your first two doses.
- People who can't have the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine may be offered AstraZeneca for their booster.
- There is no need for your booster to be the same vaccine you had for your first two doses.

### **What side effects will I experience after my booster jab?**

- Studies showed that all boosters can have short term side-effects, which are similar to those that have been seen with first and second doses. These include a sore arm, tiredness, a headache and muscle pains. People aged under 70 are more likely to have short-term side effects, but they can be treated with paracetamol and don't usually last for more than a day or two.

### **Can I have a booster if I have Covid symptoms?**

- If you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, you should take a test and self-isolate until you get your results. Whilst you are waiting for your results, you should not attend your booster appointment (make sure to log in and reschedule your booking).
- If you test positive, you need to wait four weeks (28 days) from the day of your positive test to have a booster.
- If you receive a negative test, and are feeling well enough, you may attend your appointment.

### **Apart from getting my booster, how else do I protect against Covid-19 infection?**

- With the emergence of Omicron it is more important than ever we continue to practice Hands. Face. Space.
- Everyone should wash their hands regularly, wear a face covering in crowded spaces and make space between each other wherever possible.
- Ventilation is also important, particularly if someone in your household has Covid-19 or if you are indoors with people you do not live with. Bringing fresh air into a room and removing older stale air that contains virus particles reduces the chance of spreading Covid-19. The more fresh air that is brought inside, the quicker any airborne virus will be removed from the room.

- Government advice has changed so all residents should work from home if they are able to do so.
- We are also asking residents across Essex to test regularly for Covid, whether they have symptoms or not. More information on Testing is below.

### **If I have had my booster, do I still need to test for Covid-19?**

- Regular testing for Covid-19 is still very important because you may be carrying the virus without realising.
- While it is much less likely, it is still possible to catch Covid-19 after having a booster dose. Getting the booster will reduce your risk of becoming seriously unwell if you do catch the virus, as well as offering you longer-lasting protection.

### **Where do I get a test from?**

- If you have symptoms, please self-isolate and [book a PCR test as soon as possible](#).
- If you do not have symptoms we would still encourage you to take Later Flow Tests (LFT) regularly. LFT tests are fast and free, and everyone in Essex without symptoms can now order packs of lateral flow tests to do at home. We recommend self-testing twice a week. [More information on LFT testing is available here](#).

### **The government website says no home tests are available for delivery, what should I do?**

- We are aware some residents are experiencing issues ordering online tests. The Department of Health & Social Care is experiencing significantly increased demand for online orders of LFTs following new government announcements regarding daily contact testing.
- In the meantime, you may find it easier to collect tests from your local library or Pharmacy Collect service. You can find a test pick up location close to you [here](#).
- You will need to show a collect code if you want to pick up packs of lateral flow tests from a pharmacy collection point. You can apply for a code on the GOV.UK website, [get a collection code](#), or by calling 119.

More information on the vaccine rollout across Essex is available at

<https://www.essexcovidvaccine.nhs.uk/>