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Welcome to the September Immunodeficiency UK newsletter!



Hello Immunodeficiency UK member, we hope you are keeping safe and well.

Read on for our monthly news round up and, as always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or comments.

Autumn COVID-19 booster programme



The Autumn booster programme has started. People should be offered an appointment between September and December, with those at highest risk (including people with immunodeficiency or who are immunosuppressed and their household contacts) being offered their boosters first.

These groups should be offered an Autumn booster in 2022:

- all adults aged 50 years and over

- people aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group (including people with immunosuppression)
- people aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- people aged 16 to 49 years who are carers
- residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
- frontline health and social care workers

How to get an Autumn booster

In [England](#) people who are eligible can [book their Autumn Covid booster online](#) (or call [119](#) to book). Self-declaring household contacts of people who immunocompromised can also book their own Autumn boosters online.

Booking your booster appointment online is the easiest way to get one. The NHS has also advised local sites to allow people with a weakened immune system to self-declare and attend walk-ins and vaccination centres, to make getting the extra protection as easy as possible. If you have any letters that show your condition or treatment, it might still be worth taking these with you, but you shouldn't need to provide any evidence this time. The [NHS advises that as long as it's been three months](#) since your previous dose, you'll be able to book the Autumn booster.

In [Scotland](#), people who are immunocompromised will be invited for an Autumn booster by the NHS. You might also want to check the [online portal](#) or call the vaccination helpline on [0800 030 8013](#) if you have any questions.

In [Wales](#), people who are immunocompromised will be invited for an Autumn booster by their [health board](#).

In [Northern Ireland](#), people who are immunosuppressed will be able to book their Autumn Covid booster.

Availability of vaccines

The Autumn booster roll-out will mainly use bivalent Covid vaccines, which target both the original strain of coronavirus and the Omicron variant.

Moderna's bivalent vaccine was approved as a booster in the UK on 15 August 2022. It is an mRNA vaccine. It targets both the original strain of coronavirus (called 'wild type' or original strain) and the first Omicron variant (called Omicron BA.1). In this bivalent vaccine, half of the vaccine targets the original virus strain, and the other half targets Omicron. Clinical trials showed that this booster triggered a strong immune response against both Omicron (BA.1) and the original strain of coronavirus. It might also generate a good response against Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5.

Pfizer has also made a bivalent vaccine which was approved as a booster on 3 September 2022. Like the Moderna bivalent vaccine, half of the vaccine targets the original virus strain and half of the vaccine targets Omicron BA.1. These combination vaccines, like all other vaccines, have been approved because they've been tested and found to be safe and effective.

Previous vaccines are also still highly effective, so if you are not offered a new bivalent vaccine, don't hesitate to take the vaccine you are offered. Getting a vaccine quickly is much more important in terms of protecting you, rather than which type of vaccine you get.

You can find the Department of Health and Social Care bulletin on COVID-19 for September [here](#).

Update on Evusheld



Immunodeficiency UK continues to work with many other charities in lobbying for Evusheld to be made available to people who have a suboptimal response to COVID-19 vaccination.

Following the Government's announcement on the 13th August to not procure Evusheld until a full appraisal of its clinical and cost-effectiveness has been done by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) a group of charities, spearheaded by Blood Cancer UK, [wrote to the then Secretary of State \(SoS\) for Health and Social Care, Steven Barclay MP](#), on the 23rd August,

asking for a full explanation of their decision-making. You can find the response to this letter [here](#).

Following the change in Prime Minister and reshuffle of the cabinet, a [letter](#) was sent to the new SoS for Health and Social Care, Therese Coffey MP, on the 6th September, highlighting the on-going plight of people who are immuno-compromised and asking for a meeting to discuss the actions that are needed to resolve serious problems with access to vaccination, COVID-19 treatments and the need for access to Evusheld.

NICE review of COVID-19 treatments

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

We would like to give a HUGE thank you to everyone who took the time to do our survey. Your insight was invaluable, and we will be producing a report on the findings in the next couple of weeks.

With your feedback Immunodeficiency UK submitted evidence to the NICE Multiple Technology Appraisal consultation on 'Therapeutics for people with COVID-19' and the first stage of the NICE appraisal (the consultation on the scope) for the Single Technology Appraisal for Tixagevimab–cilgavimab (Evusheld) for preventing COVID-19.

For Evusheld, it is worth noting that the NICE assessment route has not been used for other COVID-19 treatments such as sotrovimab, remdesivir, and Paxlovid which were made available rapidly through a multi-agency initiative called [RAPID C-19](#) and that the NICE process won't be completed until April 2023.

Recent coverage on Evusheld can be found at the links below:

- On the 1st September, The Jeremy Vine show, with Paddy O’Connell, as stand-in, devoted 15 minutes on the situation of immunocompromised groups and the need for access to Evusheld. Mark Oakley of the Evusheld Campaign Group gave his personal story of continuing to shield, and Fergus Walsh, Medical Editor at the BBC gave comment.

You can listen in at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001b9ym>

The interviews start at 1.05 minutes into the programme.

- [Coronavirus: Evusheld campaigners call for government to reverse decision - BBC News](#)
- [Covid: Oxford oncologist in plea to government over Evusheld - BBC News](#)

Food Standard Agency (FSA) alert: ongoing risk of Listeria associated with smoked fish



Food Standards Scotland (FSS), the UKHSA and the FSA are reinforcing their advice to vulnerable groups of consumers in relation to the risks of Listeria monocytogenes infection linked to ready to eat smoked fish.

This is because of an ongoing outbreak of Listeria monocytogenes. The advice to those who are over 65, pregnant or have weakened immune systems is that they should ensure that ready to eat smoked fish is thoroughly cooked before they eat it. More information about the advice and the outbreak can be found [here](#). If you have enquiries, please contact external.affairs@food.gov.uk



A Huge Thank You

The support of our donors and fundraisers is vital in our mission to support and represent people affected by primary and secondary immunodeficiencies. We'd like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has donated or fundraised for us this year. Whether you've given a one off or monthly donation, sponsored a fundraiser, donated in memory of a loved one or hosted your own event, we are super thankful.

We are funded entirely by donations and grants and receive no government funding and we wouldn't be able to operate without your invaluable help.



In October of last year, Steve lost his kind and fun-loving son Jezz after having two stem cell transplants to treat his immunodeficiency.

‘Jezz passed away last October and left a great hole in all our lives. In his 26 years he did a lot, not just achieving for himself but in the wonderful effect he had on other people’, says Steve.

To celebrate Steve’s life and to help raise funds for Immunodeficiency UK the family along with Gateshead Rugby Club Beer Festival hosted a fundraiser. Jezz was a member of Gateshead Rugby Club and he was known as T Rex due to his running style.

The event raised over £4,600 for Immunodeficiency UK and we couldn’t be more grateful. This donation will go toward helping us to support more people living with primary or secondary immunodeficiencies nationwide.

If you've raised money for Immunodeficiency UK and would like to share your story, we'd love to hear from you. Or if you need any support hosting your own fundraising event, feel free to drop an email to fay.fagon@immunodeficiencyuk.org.

Take care and stay safe,
Best Wishes,
Susan and Fay
The Immunodeficiency UK Team

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