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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Third Covid Jabs Available To Book Online For People Who Are Severely Immunosuppressed

People who are severely immunosuppressed can book their third Covid jab online from today, as the NHS national booking system opens up to more people.

In line with JCVI guidance, those who are classed as severely immunosuppressed as a result of treatment, for conditions such as cancer or for those with long-term chronic conditions where their immunity is affected by medication, are eligible for a third dose eight weeks after their second dose.

So far more than three quarters of those who are severely immunosuppressed have had a third Covid vaccination.

From today, adults who are eligible for a third dose of the Covid vaccine and have received a clinical referral letter from their doctor can go online and book an appointment, as the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to protect those most at risk from the virus.

The NHS COVID-19 vaccination booking service will offer an option to 'book my 3rd dose appointment' for adults who had a weakened immune system at the time they had a second dose.

After JCVI recommended offering a third primary dose to those who are severely immunosuppressed, the NHS wrote twice to trusts and GPs asking that doctors identify and contact people in this important group, either to offer them a third dose directly or to provide them with a letter so that this can be accessed elsewhere at vaccination sites.

The NHS also wrote directly to around 400,000 potentially eligible patients encouraging them to speak to their clinician if they had not already done so.

Professor Stephen Powis, NHS national medical director, said: “NHS staff continue to deliver first, second and third doses, to those who are eligible, alongside administering around 14 million boosters in just over nine weeks.

“Decisions on when to get a third dose remains between a patient and their clinician who knows about their ongoing treatment – more than three quarters of people who are severely immunosuppressed have had their third dose so far, and from today people can also book in online with a letter from their GP or clinician.

“It’s incredibly important that people get the full recommended course of Covid vaccines, especially those most at risk from the virus – boosters and third doses are not a nice to have, they are the best way to protect you and your loved ones this winter.”

Although the number of people in this cohort can change over relatively short periods of time – for example patients may start chemotherapy or other treatments and so their eligibility for third and subsequent doses will change – around half a million are eligible for a third jab in England, and more than seven in 10 have already had theirs.

The decision on when to get a third jab for people who are severely immunosuppressed is made between patients and their clinicians, and the majority of third doses are being administered through hospital consultants and GPs.

In line with JCVI guidance, the third dose for those with severe immunosuppression should usually be given at least eight weeks after the second dose.

Those with a clinical referral letter from their doctor can also use the NHS online Covid vaccine [walk-in finder](#) and attend their local vaccination centre for their third dose.

The NHS has already taken steps to improve access for those who are severely immunosuppressed, such as writing to trusts and GPs asking them to identify and contact people in this group; writing to around 400,000 eligible patients encouraging them to speak to their clinician if they had not already done so; and writing to cancer leads to support patient identification and the provision of a clinical authorisation letter.

In addition to people being vaccinated through their GP or hospital, for those with a referral letter there are currently around 1400 vaccination sites offering bookings for third dose Covid-19 vaccinations and 300 sites offering walk-in appointments.

The offer of a third dose for people who are severely immunosuppressed is separate to the booster programme.

Since the NHS in England made history with the first Covid vaccination delivered outside a clinical trial in December 2020, 95 million doses of the life-saving vaccine have been delivered – with more than nine in 10 adults having had their first vaccination.

Around 14 million boosters have been delivered in total since the booster campaign kicked off in September, less than 48 hours after updated JCVI guidance.

There are more places delivering vaccines now than at any other point in the programme, including pharmacies, GP practices and other community sites, meaning the vast majority of people live within 10 miles of a fixed vaccination clinic.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Severe immunosuppression at the time of vaccination is defined using the guidance and timings stated in the Green Book.
- The severely immunosuppressed cohort is dynamic and changes over relatively short periods of time (days and weeks), for example many patients will start or finish courses of chemotherapy or other treatments and so their eligibility for 3rd and subsequent doses will change. Analysis based on coding of available information estimates that significant progress is being made in vaccinating this group – with uptake now around seven in ten people, and more coming forward each day.

Ends