

# Millions of extra flu jabs available to support largest UK vaccination programme

- Flu vaccine authorised for supply in the UK to ensure as many people as possible are vaccinated during the pandemic
- More than 30 million people will be vaccinated this year to protect the vulnerable and support the NHS
- GPs, NHS trusts and pharmacies will be able to order supplies

Millions of extra flu vaccines will soon be available to support the most comprehensive flu vaccination programme in the UK's history.

More than 30 million people will be vaccinated this year to protect them from flu, with priority being given to the most vulnerable, elderly and children.

To support this, millions of doses of Flublok® have been authorised for supply by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) as part of our response to the ongoing public health crisis after it met the standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

The vaccine has been used in the United States for the last 3 winters. A physically and biologically similar vaccine, Supemtek, was recommended for approval by the European Medicines Agency in September 2020. All vaccines, including Flublok®, undergo 3 stages of clinical trials and are assessed by the regulator for safety, effectiveness and quality before they are given to patients.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van Tam said:

As we approach the winter and cases of COVID-19 continue to rise, it is crucial we double down on efforts to vaccinate as many people as possible from flu.

We have increased the number of people eligible for free flu jabs this year to reduce all avoidable risks and protect people from illness.

Flublok has been in regular use in the United States – and the evidence shows that it is an excellent product.

I want to reassure everyone that all vaccines have undergone robust clinical trials and rigorous checks by the regulator to ensure they are safe, effective and of a high quality.

Flu can have serious consequences and vulnerable people can die of it. Having the vaccine protects you, and helps reduce transmission to others.

This winter more than ever, with COVID-19 still circulating, we need to help reduce all avoidable risks. Vaccinating more people will help reduce flu transmission and stop people becoming ill.

A free flu vaccine is available to:

- people aged 65 and over
- pregnant women
- people with some pre-existing conditions
- all school year groups up to Year 7
- household contacts of those on the [NHS shielded patient list](#)

Once vaccination of the most 'at-risk' groups is well underway, the department will work with clinicians to decide when to open the programme to invite people aged 50 to 64, with further details to be announced soon.

The NHS will contact people directly, including information about where to go to get the vaccine. Guidance has now gone out to GPs, pharmacies and trusts to provide information on how to access additional flu supply.

GPs, NHS trusts and community pharmacies will be able to order stock from the government's centrally procured supply to complement their own flu vaccination stocks, ensuring as many people as possible are able to receive the vaccination this winter.

Dr Christian Schneider, Interim Chief Scientific Officer at the MHRA said:

Protecting health and saving lives is at the heart of all our work.

The MHRA assessed Flublok against safety, quality and effectiveness standards and sought advice from the government's independent expert scientific advisory body – the Commission on Human Medicines. We are satisfied that this vaccine protects against flu and meets high standards of safety and quality.

Your doctor can recommend the best time to be vaccinated and please read the patient information leaflet carefully before you get the flu vaccine.

The expanded flu vaccination programme is part of plans to ready the NHS – both for the risk of a second peak of coronavirus cases, and to relieve winter pressures on A&E and emergency care.

Increased vaccinations will help to reduce pressure on the NHS this winter by preventing flu-sickness, which can cause hospitalisation and even death.

Flublok® is licensed for use in the USA by the Food and Drug Administration and has been used there since 2016. It has been authorised for temporary supply by the MHRA.

In response to certain public health threats, supply of a medicine may be

temporarily authorised for use when it is satisfied there is robust evidence to show the safety, quality and effectiveness of the medicine.

Flublok® is only appropriate for adults over the age of 18.

The Human Medicine Regulations 2012 have been [amended to support the roll-out of vaccines](#). This includes expanding the trained workforce that can administer flu vaccines and a COVID-19 vaccine once a safe and effective one has been developed.