

Frequently asked questions
(Rheumatology 3rd primary dose COVID vaccine)

1. Should I delay or stop my rheumatology treatment? And will my treatment affect how the vaccine works?

If you're already taking medicines that suppress the immune system, you shouldn't stop or delay these to have the vaccine, as doing this could cause you to have a flare-up, which can increase your risk from COVID-19. If you haven't yet started treatment with medicines that suppress the immune system it might be a good idea to delay this until a couple of weeks after you have had the last dose of the vaccine. If you are due treatment with **Rituximab**, and you are offered a date for vaccination, please get vaccinated and **delay Rituximab for four weeks**. But you should only think about doing this if your rheumatology team say that it is safe to delay your treatment.

2. What is the difference between a third dose and a booster dose of the vaccine?

Third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are being offered to people who have a severely suppressed immune system either because of a health condition or treatment. This is because research has found that people in this group are less likely to have received a good level of protection from their two doses of the vaccine. A third dose is being offered to this group to try to increase their initial levels of protection.

Booster jabs are being offered to people who are likely to have received a high level of protection from their first two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, but who would be at an increased risk of COVID-19 if their protection levels decreased. The booster dose will be offered to boost this group's level of protection, at least 6 months after getting the first two doses, to maintain their high levels of protection in the long term.

3. I have already received my booster vaccine. Will this mean I will not be eligible for another booster vaccine in 6 months?

If you already have had a booster vaccine, then class this as your 3rd primary dose. It is expected that severely immunosuppressed individuals will become eligible for a booster dose as part of a routine booster programme from

around 6 months after their third primary dose. Further advice will become available.

4. Can I have my 3rd dose COVID vaccine and the flu vaccine together?

Most people who can get a COVID-19 vaccine are also eligible for the annual flu vaccine.

If you are offered both vaccines, it's safe to have them at the same time.

5. I'm currently ill with COVID-19, should I get the 3rd dose COVID vaccine?

You should get your 3rd primary dose COVID vaccine, however it is best to delay getting the vaccine until **28 days after a positive PCR test**.

6. Can I book a 3rd primary dose COVID vaccine via my GP?

Yes, if you are unable to attend Elland Road park and ride vaccination centre, then you can arrange to have this done at your GP surgery. Your GP surgery has also received a letter recommending you have a 3rd primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

7. I am on an immunosuppressant that I have at regular intervals, (for example every 2 weeks or 4 weeks), at what stage in my cycle of treatment is it safe to have the 3rd COVID vaccine?

General consensus is to have your vaccine when you are offered an appointment.