

This letter is to provide information and further clarification for influenza vaccine providers about who is eligible to receive the vaccine on the NHS.

As you'll be aware, many people with Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis – the two most common forms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) - take medicines that weaken their immune system in order to manage their condition. This can leave them vulnerable to serious complications if they develop an infection. More information on IBD for GPs and other primary healthcare professionals can be found at [www.rcgp.org.uk/ibd](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/ibd).

The 2019 British Society of Gastroenterology (BSG) guidelines state that “IBD patients have a greater risk of contracting influenza than non-IBD populations and are more likely to require admission to hospital. **Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all immunosuppressed patients**”. This will include, but is not limited to, those on the medications listed below:

- Anti-TNFs - Adalimumab (Humira, Amgevita, Hyrimoz, Imraldi, Hulio), Golimumab (Simponi) and Infliximab (Remicade, Inflectra, Remsima, Zessly)
- Azathioprine (Imuran) or Mercaptopurine (6-MP)
- Ciclosporin or Tacrolimus
- Methotrexate (Maxtrex, Methofill, Metoject, Ebetrex, Namaxir, Nordimetand Zlatal)
- Oral steroids such as prednisolone
- Tofacitinib (Xeljanz)
- Ustekinumab (Stelara)
- Vedolizumab (Entyvio)

The BSG guidelines can be downloaded at: [www.bsg.org.uk/clinical-resource/bsg-consensus-guidelines-on-the-management-of-inflammatory-bowel-disease-in-adults/](http://www.bsg.org.uk/clinical-resource/bsg-consensus-guidelines-on-the-management-of-inflammatory-bowel-disease-in-adults/)

Crohn's & Colitis UK welcomes the extension of the free flu vaccine this year to people who are on government shielding lists across the four nations, as well as those who live with someone who is. It is however important to note that **not everybody with Crohn's and Colitis in the high-risk group will have received a shielding letter**. Our Life in Lockdown survey found that 1 in 5 people with Crohn's and Colitis (20%) did not receive the correct shielding information. We have worked with The British Society of Gastroenterology to identify those people with Crohn's or Colitis who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19. These guidelines can be found at [crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/covid19-risk](http://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/covid19-risk).

We hope this information is helpful and thank you for reducing the health risk of your patients at this challenging time.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Sleet  
Chief Executive