

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

The JCVI anticipate the 2021 to 2022 flu season may be much larger and begin earlier than usual ([Annual National Flu programme 2021 to 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94441/annual-national-flu-programme-2021-to-2022.pdf)). This means it is more important than ever to get people vaccinated against flu before the winter.

The JCVI recommend that if practical, COVID-19 and influenza vaccines should be given at the same time. ([JCVI statement regarding a COVID-19 booster vaccine programme for winter 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-recommends-covid-19-and-influenza-vaccines-given-together))

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 live with someone who is immunosuppressed.

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