



The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2021;372:n852<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n852>

Published: 29 March 2021

Covid vaccine: Prioritise over 16s living with immunosuppressed adults, says JCVI

Elisabeth Mahase

People aged 16 or over who live with immunosuppressed adults should be prioritised for covid-19 vaccination alongside priority group 6 (people aged 16 to 65 who have a clinical condition that puts them at higher risk), the UK government's vaccine advisory committee has said.

This would include people living in households with an adult who has a weakened immune system, such as those with blood cancer or HIV, or people on immunosuppressive treatment, including chemotherapy, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation said. These people are not only more likely to have poorer outcomes after SARS-CoV-2 infection but may not respond as well to the vaccine as others, recent evidence indicates, said the JCVI.

The committee said it had made the new recommendation after evidence emerged showing that the covid-19 vaccines may reduce transmission, meaning that vaccinating those around immunosuppressed individuals could help reduce their risk of infection.

The JCVI's chair of covid-19 immunisations, Wei Shen Lim, said, "The vaccination programme has so far seen high vaccine uptake and very encouraging results on infection rates, hospitalisations, and mortality. Yet we know that the vaccine isn't as effective in those who are immunosuppressed. Our latest advice will help reduce the risk of infection in those who may not be able to fully benefit from being vaccinated themselves."

Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at Public Health England, said, "Our surveillance systems and research studies are showing that the covid-19 vaccines can reduce asymptomatic infection and limit transmission of the virus. By vaccinating those who live with adults who are immunosuppressed, we can further help protect vulnerable people."