

COVID-19 community update in Hampshire w/c 20th December 2021

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The current situation is changing rapidly with the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

This bulletin is a correct reflection of the latest guidance and rules at time of writing, but further changes may be introduced over the festive period. We would therefore encourage everyone across Hampshire to check the Government and NHS website links below for up-to-date news and guidance.

There are four key messages below to help our communities stay safe:

1. BOOSTERS ARE A CRITICAL PART OF SAFE BEHAVIOURS

COVID-19 remains a serious health risk, and a booster significantly improves protection from serious illness from the Omicron, and other, COVID variants. To help protect yourself and others:

- If you haven't already, [get vaccinated](#) (it is not too late to get your first or second dose)
- If you are already vaccinated and eligible, get a [booster](#) vaccination
- Make getting the booster one of your safe behaviours:
 - You must now wear a face covering in shops and on all public transport
 - Meeting outdoors is safer; let fresh air in if you meet indoors
 - [Get tested](#) before meeting up with others, especially those who may be at risk

A lot of people are trying to book their booster jab at the moment – if you can't book when you try then give it another go later that day or the next day. More appointments are coming [online](#) all the time.

2. EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT GETTING VACCINATED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

There is very clear [evidence](#) that the death rate from COVID is much higher amongst people who have not been vaccinated.

If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy – There's [no evidence](#) the COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on your chances of becoming pregnant. You can be vaccinated against coronavirus (COVID-19) if:

- you're pregnant or think you might be
- you're breastfeeding
- you're trying for a baby or might get pregnant in the future

If you have already had COVID-19 – It has been [shown](#) that there is a greater risk in re-infection from Omicron, so if you have had COVID-19 infection, but not been vaccinated, it's a good time to do it.

Vaccination booking information:

- Health and care teams are doing all they can to provide additional capacity to ensure every adult in Hampshire and Isle of Wight is offered a booster jab by 31 December.
- Details of available clinics in [Hampshire and Isle of Wight](#), and [Frimley](#), will continue to be added to as they are available - please check back regularly for updates.
- To book, please respond to an invitation from your GP surgery, call 119, or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

3. STRUGGLING TO COPE BECAUSE OF COVID-19? HELP IS AT HAND

Daily tasks such as buying groceries at the shops, collecting prescriptions and walking the dog, may not be so simple when self-isolating. That is why Hampshire residents are being reminded they are not alone: help is available if they are having a difficult time due to COVID-19 or because they are self-isolating.

The Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline signposts information, advice and relevant services that can assist with a range of issues: from where to find help in the community or dealing with money worries, to emotional support and practical help when self-isolating. The helpline can be contacted on **0333 370 4000 (calls charged at local rate)**. For more information and festive opening times visit: www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/volunteer-welfare.

4. THE [NHS COVID APP](#) CAN ALSO HELP YOU

The NHS App is available to download in England and Wales, and is the fastest way to see if you're at risk from coronavirus. The faster you know, the quicker you can alert and protect your loved ones and community, helping to stop the spread of coronavirus.

It helps you [check into venues](#) where proof of vaccination is required – currently this is needed for certain venues such as nightclubs and larger events, but if guidance and rules change on where proof of vaccination is needed over the festive period, then downloading the App now will help you be prepared.

[Information on how to download and use the app](#) is available on the NHS website.

A REMINDER OF OTHER KEY FACTS AND LINKS:

Information on testing:

- If you have symptoms: you must isolate and [book a PCR test](#). If that PCR test is positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days.
- If you have no symptoms: using a [Lateral Flow \(Rapid\) test](#) is advised to keep others protected:
 - if you will be in a high risk situation that day
 - before you visit people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19
 - if you have been told that you are a contact of someone who has COVID-19 but you do not have to self-isolate
- If you get a positive result from a lateral flow test, you must [self-isolate](#) immediately and [book a PCR test](#) within two days.
- [Information about testing](#) (with or without symptoms), and about test kit collection for people without symptoms, can be found on the Government's website. Some pharmacies may temporarily be experiencing low stocks of Lateral Flow (Rapid) tests for people without symptoms, but these can still be ordered online and delivered direct to your door.

Latest travel and quarantine rules:

- Check the [Government's latest advice on travel](#) to ensure you are making safe travel decisions and acting in line with the advice.

Thank you for your continuing support to **#KeepHampshireSafe**