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Media Release

Volunteers needed for study to look at whether shingles and COVID-19 or flu vaccines can be given at same time

People aged 50 and over are invited to take part in a new research study at the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) NHS Foundation Trust looking at the co-administration of the shingles vaccine with the COVID-19 or flu vaccine.

Researchers at the University of Bristol are testing the safety and immune responses of giving the shingles vaccine at the same time as the flu or COVID-19 vaccine and are welcoming volunteers to take part in the study, sponsored by University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW).

The 'ZosterFluCOV' study is coordinated by the Bristol Trials Centre with trusts taking part across multiple locations around the UK, including the RUH. More information about the sites can be found on the [ZosterFluCOV](#) website.

Dr Rajeka Lazarus, Consultant in Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at UHBW, Honorary Research Fellow at the Bristol Medical School: Population Health Sciences (PHS) and Chief Investigator for the trial, said: "The number of vaccines available to prevent infection in older adults has increased over the past ten years and is likely to increase further.

"We hope this study will provide evidence to improve how we offer vaccines to older adults."

In the UK, a shingles vaccine is offered to people when they reach 65 years old. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are also offered to people in this age group. If the shingles vaccine could be offered during the same appointment as either flu or COVID-19 vaccine it would save having to make several trips to see the GP.

Symptoms of shingles include a tingling or painful feeling in an area of skin, a headache or feeling unwell, and a rash which may develop into itchy blisters. Some people have pain at the

site of the infection that can go on for many years and is difficult to treat. The vaccine stops most people getting shingles but those that do have a milder and shorter illness. It is okay to have the shingles vaccine if you have had shingles before, it will boost your immunity.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please visit zosterflucov.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/participate/ and choose the RUH.

Ends

Further information about the study:

Am I eligible to take part?

- Are you aged 50 or over?
- Has it been more than five years since you received a vaccine for shingles?
- Have you received your initial dose of COVID-19 vaccinations (usually two doses)?

What does the study involve?

As part of the study, you will be asked to come to your local site on six separate occasions. Blood samples may be taken at the visits and you will receive vaccinations at the first, third and fifth visits. Depending on which group you are in, you may also receive a vaccination at visit six. Participants who attend all study visits will receive both the flu and COVID-19 vaccine as part of the study. If applicable, you will also need to perform a urine pregnancy test at each vaccination visit. If you are eligible, you will be randomised to one of five groups, the group you are randomised to will determine whether you receive the shingles vaccine at the same time as either the flu or COVID-19 vaccine.

You will be free to end your participation in the study at any stage.

Will I be compensated?

You will be compensated for your time and participation, and your travel expenses. The total amount compensated will be up to £45 per visit.

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

We're currently building a new Cancer Centre at the RUH. The Dyson Cancer Centre, which is set to open in autumn 2023, will help transform the care we provide for patients, families and carers.



Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk