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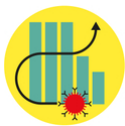
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Covid booster vaccines every four months cannot continue, warns Sir Patrick Vallance

A jab every 16 weeks 'isn't credible' and will need to move to a 'sensible annual cycle', says the government's chief scientific adviser

By Sarah Knapton, SCIENCE EDITOR

30 March 2022 • 2:50pm



Latest UK deaths: 651 **+355%**
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The four-monthly [Covid vaccination booster programme](#) cannot continue, [Sir Patrick Vallance](#) has warned - saying that the NHS is instead likely to move to an annual jab for those most at risk.

The Government's chief scientific adviser said Britain needed to move to a "sensible annual cycle" of immunisation that [ensures the most vulnerable are protected](#).

Speaking at the Science and Technology Select Committee, Sir Patrick said: "What isn't credible is to start having vaccines every four months for everybody. That's just not the way this works.

"What I think it will probably look like will be annual vaccines for a certain part of the population, as we have for flu.

"What we need to move to though is a better understanding of how to predict which vaccine is required each year. There are lots of possibilities. You could choose to go after the latest

is required each year. There are lots of possibilities. You could choose to go after the latest variant, you could choose to try and design a vaccine that fits somewhere in the middle and covers everybody.

“We have to move to a sensible annual cycle.”

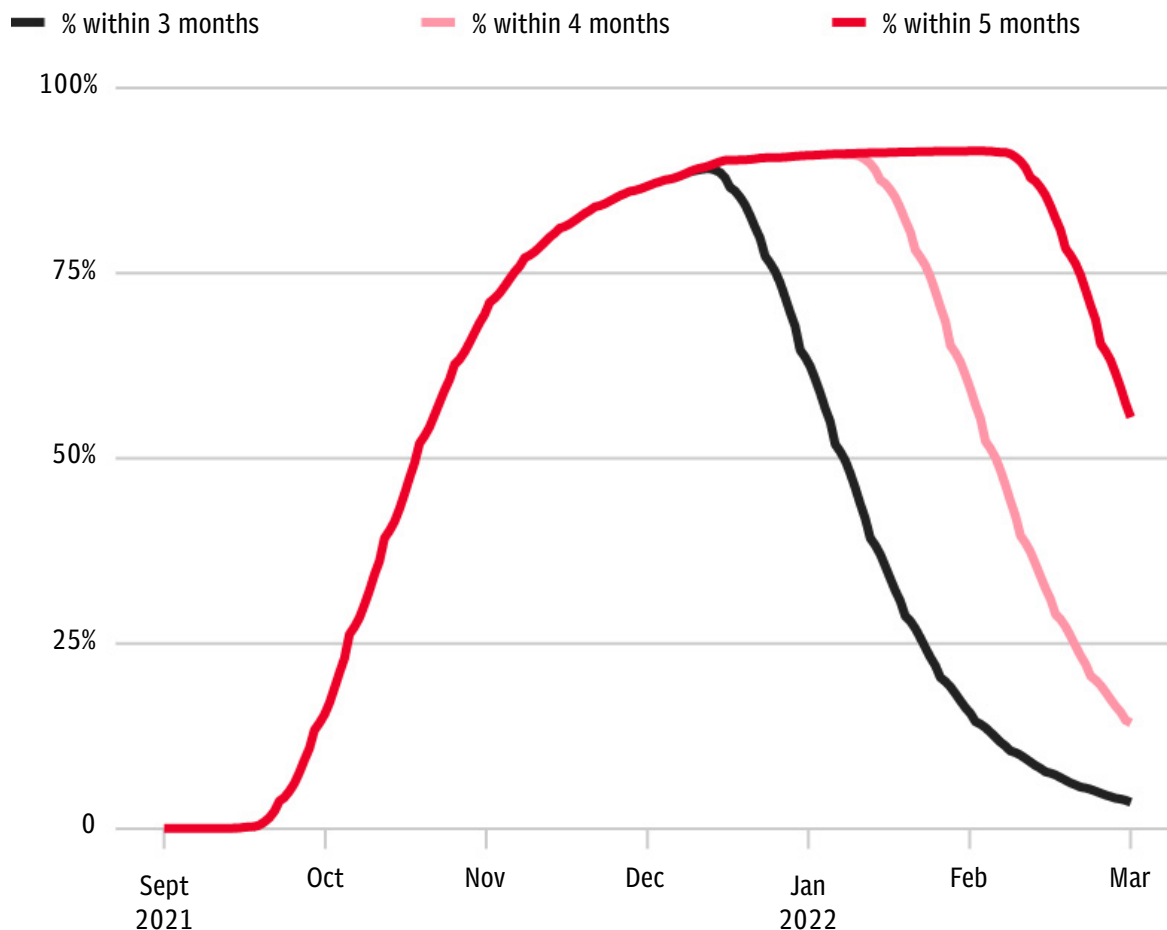
‘Number of infections beginning to turn’

[A fourth jab is due to be rolled out](#) for over-75s, care home residents and the immunocompromised in the coming weeks. However, it is unclear whether younger, healthy people will still be offered Covid jabs next winter.

Currently, [people offered the flu jab](#) include the over-50s, people with underlying health conditions, pregnant women, care home residents, carers, frontline health staff and those with housemates at risk of infection.

THIRD DOSES ARE LIKELY TO BE WANING

% of over-75s who had their booster in past 3, 4 or 5 months



Sir Patrick said that although coronavirus case numbers are high, there was evidence that [the current surge was coming to an end](#) and that the severity of Covid was being kept under control by vaccines and other measures.

He said there were no plans at present to recall the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), [which stood down at the beginning of March](#).

“We’ve got very high levels of infection at the moment, as indeed many other countries do,” Sir Patrick said.

“I think the number of infections is beginning to turn, so we may be quite close or at the peak and it may start coming down shortly.”

Sir Patrick also said it was important to look back at lockdown and “dissect” which parts had worked. He said it was clear that there were “detrimental effects” from lockdown and said it was something that should not be undertaken lightly in future.

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