

People urged to get flu vaccine

People are urged to get the free flu vaccine if offered it, even if they feel fit and healthy. The vaccine offers protection against a number of viruses which are expected to circulate this winter.

Important to get vaccinated

The vaccine changes each year to cover the strains which are likely to be around over the course of the flu season, so it's important to get immunised every year.

This year two new and more effective vaccines are being introduced to improve the protection offered to those at risk:

- a vaccine for people aged 65 and over), which has been specifically designed to increase immunity in this age group
- a vaccine for people aged under 65 who have underlying health conditions and pregnant women

The vaccine does not give people the flu.

You can find out more at the page below:

Getting the vaccine

Everyone who is eligible for the vaccine should make themselves aware of their own GP surgery's flu vaccination arrangements. They will be able to get the vaccine by the end of November.

If you have any queries, you should contact your GP directly.

As it takes approximately two weeks following vaccination to develop maximum protection against flu, it is important to get vaccinated early.

If you wait until flu starts circulating, it may be too late for the vaccine to protect you.

Everyone should aim to have the vaccine by early December.

Pregnant women

Pregnant women are more likely to have serious illness if they catch flu.

They will be invited at all stages of pregnancy to get the vaccine by their GP, to help protect them and their unborn baby.

Children

Primary school children will get the vaccination at school, while pre-school children will receive it through their local GP surgery.

Most children get the vaccine through a quick and painless nasal spray.

You can find out more on the [flu vaccine for children page](#).

Flu symptoms

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness, and in some cases, very dangerous.

The flu virus spreads easily and quickly through the air when people cough and sneeze without covering their nose and mouth.

The same [flu symptoms](#) are experienced by both adults and children:

- fever
- chills
- aching muscles and joints
- headache
- extreme tiredness

These symptoms can last between two and eight days and, for some, can lead to serious illness and result in a stay in hospital.

More useful links