

Press release: Nasal spray effective at protecting vaccinated children from flu

Data published today (31 August 2017) by Public Health England (PHE) has shown that the flu vaccine nasal spray reduced the risk of vaccinated children getting flu by 65.8% in the 2016 to 2017 season in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Effectiveness of flu vaccine in younger adults aged 18 to 64 years reduced the risk of flu by 40.6% among those who received the vaccine in the 2016 to 2017 season, which is within the range we would typically expect to see.

The UK programme plans to offer flu vaccine to all children aged 2 to 11 years with the aim of providing both direct protection to those children who have been vaccinated, but also by reducing their risk of infecting others. This will indirectly protect other vulnerable members of the population such as those with weakened immune systems and the elderly.

The flu strain and the flu vaccine, recommended by the World Health Organization, changes every year and the flu vaccine generally provides an important level of protection. This year we did not find that the vaccine was significantly effective in protecting against influenza for the over-65 population. This highlights the importance of the vaccine programme in children, which is intended to indirectly protect other vulnerable members of the community, as well as the children themselves.

Further action can be taken to mitigate flu such as influenza antiviral treatment and prophylaxis. New flu vaccines are also being developed, which may provide better protection for the elderly.

Jenny Harries, Deputy Medical Director for Public Health England (PHE) said:

It is good news that last winter children were particularly well protected against flu with the vaccine nasal spray. We know children can spread flu more than others and if we can keep them well it means that the infection is less likely to pass to those who are at high risk. We also saw the risk of flu fall by over 40% in vaccinated adults under 65 allowing more people to stay well last winter.

For the vast majority of us flu passes reasonably quickly, but for some, it can be extremely serious and even fatal. Vaccines are the best defence we have against flu and not only protect people who have received the vaccine but also those around them.

Achieving high coverage in children with a vaccine which has been shown to work well will offer those over 65 protection from flu, even though we did not find that the vaccine offered significant protection in this age group.

The lower effectiveness in the older population this season highlights the need to continue to expand the programme among the young, as by protecting them, we can also protect those at risk of severe disease.

The childhood flu vaccine programme is being expanded to include children in school year 4 in 2017 to 2018. Also, 4 year olds, who were previously offered flu vaccination in general practice, will now be offered it at school in reception class. So all children from reception class through to year 4 will be offered flu vaccination in the forthcoming season.

The [latest data on flu effectiveness](#) is based on contributions submitted by PHE, Public Health Wales, Health Protection Scotland, the Public Health Agency of Northern Ireland and RCGP.

The flu vaccine nasal spray used in the children's programme is the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV). The vaccine used in the adult programme is 'inactivated' vaccine. It is crucial that people who are eligible for flu vaccination get vaccinated this coming season.

The flu virus continually changes and evolves – it is unpredictable. In February each year, the World Health Organisation recommends the strains of flu virus that should be included in the flu vaccine for the Northern hemisphere for the forthcoming season. These strains are those predicted to circulate in the coming season. There is always the possibility that the virus will change after the point at which vaccine strain selection has taken place, although this is unusual

Each season, the effectiveness of the vaccine will vary slightly due to a number of factors such as the age group mainly affected, the dominant circulating strain and the composition of the influenza vaccine that particular season.

Policy paper: Guildford temporary defences

Guildford has been identified as a community where a temporary flood defence could help reduce the impact of flooding.

Press release: Clampdown on illegal fishing in Lincolnshire

Fifteen anglers have been served notices for fishing offences committed on the River Witham. It comes after a clampdown on illegal fishing in which 180 spot checks were carried out to ensure anglers were properly licensed and fishing within the rules.

Enforcement officers were split into 4 teams on Sunday 20 August, as part of a multi-agency operation led by the Environment Agency.

180 offences uncovered

Anglers were caught allegedly committing a variety of offences including 2 for fish theft and one for using an illegal method.

Officers also seized an offensive weapon from an angler's vehicle while another vehicle was reported for being without tax and insurance.

Multi-agency operation

The Environment Agency's enforcement team worked in conjunction with the Midlands Wildlife Crime Group including officers from Derbyshire, Humberside, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire police forces and the [Angling Trust](#).

Lee Watts, Fisheries Enforcement Officer East Midlands for the Environment Agency, said:

We take illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone committing offences can expect to be prosecuted and face a substantial fine.

I am happy with the results, which show our partnership commitment to making our inland waterways free from illegal fishing activities.

I'd like to offer my thanks to all officers, police staff and Angling Trust personnel who took part and made it a successful operation. It's through partnerships like this that we can take action and send clear message to those who break the law.

Not only does illegal fishing damage the sport it also poses a serious risk of spreading fish diseases and invasive species. The irresponsible and illegal actions of a few can have widespread consequences for fisheries.

Angling Trust Fisheries Enforcement Support Service National Enforcement Manager, Dilip Sarkar MBE, said:

This was a perfect example of partnership working in action – and what can be achieved by everyone working together. As always, we are most grateful to our volunteers for so public-spiritedly giving up their time to help protect fish and fisheries. We look forward to more of these operations.

Hefty penalties

Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £2,500, and up to £50,000 for byelaw offences.

Last year, the Environment Agency checked more than 62,000 fishing licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences, resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

Anyone who suspects illegal fishing to be taking place should report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or to [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A full fishing licence costs from just £30 (concessions and other types available) or is free for those aged 12 to 16. [Licences are available via GOV.UK](#), by phoning 0344 800 5386, or from a local [Post Office](#).

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund improvements for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. The income is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

[Press release: Clampdown on illegal fishing in Lincolnshire](#)

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[Press release: Man who attempted to smuggle people hidden in cabinets convicted](#)

Canterbury Crown Court heard how on 14 February 2016 a van was stopped by Border Force officers at the UK Control Zone in Coquelles, France. The driver was Huzaifa Hasan Musa, 22.

Border Force officers searched the van which was filled with furniture. A woman and child were found hidden in 1 cabinet in the load, and 3 men in another. All 5 Iraqi nationals were handed to the French Police Aux Frontieres.

Director Paul Morgan, from Border Force South East and Europe, said:

Musa expressed surprise when the 5 people were found, but they had been quite deliberately hidden. They could not have got there by

themselves.

People smugglers like Musa exploit the vulnerable and put lives at risk. Border Force targets its resources on prevention, protection and prosecution activity, working in close partnership with other law enforcement agencies, to prosecute those involved in this criminal trade.

Musa, of Mary Street, Scunthorpe, was arrested at the scene and the case was passed to Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) team.

Musa claimed that he had been to visit his step-grandmother near Dunkirk, though he couldn't provide an address to officers, and said that he had taken her furniture because she had intended to throw it all away. He later changed his story to say he had taken the furniture with him when he left for his trip.

However, analysis of Musa's mobile phone identified a string of suspicious messages including one Musa had sent saying as soon as he got through the tunnel he would get paid.

After a 2 day trial at Canterbury Crown Court, Musa was found guilty of assisting unlawful immigration into the UK and sentenced to 3 and a half years' imprisonment.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the Immigration Enforcement Criminal Investigations team, said:

Our officers built a compelling case to prove that Musa's story was a pack of lies. He claimed the purpose of his visit was to visit family, when in reality he was engaged in people smuggling in order to line his own pockets and with no thought for the safety of those he was transporting.

I hope this case serves as a clear warning that those who try to the UK's break immigration laws will be brought to justice.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org>.