

IT'S TOO BIG TO IGNORE.

DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS?

Information and advice for patients.

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FLU, THE FACTS.

What is flu?

Flu is an acute viral respiratory infection. It spreads easily from person to person¹; at home, at school, at work, at the supermarket, on the train.

It gets passed on when someone who already has flu coughs or sneezes and is transmitted through the air by droplets, or it can be spread by hands contaminated with the virus¹.

Symptoms can include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, extreme fatigue, a dry cough, sore throat and stuffy nose². Most people will recover within a week but flu can cause severe illness or even death in people at high risk¹. It is estimated that around 10,000 deaths in England and Wales are attributable to influenza infections annually^{2,3}.


Why should I get a flu vaccination?

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza¹.


Although anyone can catch flu, certain people can be at greater risk as a result of flu, as their body may find it hard to fight the virus.

If you are pregnant, 65 years or over, a child*, morbidly obese (with BMI \geq 40), suffer from severe asthma, chronic liver disease (cirrhosis, biliary atresia, chronic hepatitis), diabetes or immunosuppression, have a heart, kidney or lung condition, have suffered a stroke or transient ischaemic attack, you are considered at greater risk from flu. If you fall into one of the "at-risk" groups above or you are a carer or someone in close contact with immunocompromised individuals you are eligible for a free flu vaccination⁴. **Speak to your healthcare professional today to book your free flu vaccination.**

If you are not eligible for a free flu vaccination, you can still protect yourself and those around you from flu by getting a flu vaccination at a local pharmacy.



*Check with your GP about child age eligibility.





How does a flu vaccine work?

About 10 to 14 days after vaccination, your body makes antibodies that help to protect you against any similar flu viruses that may infect you. The flu vaccine will provide you with protection for the upcoming flu season⁵.

Will a flu vaccination give me flu?

No. All injectable available flu vaccines are inactivated and do not contain live viruses. One vaccine, an intranasal vaccination, contains live attenuated viruses that have been weakened and adapted. None of the influenza vaccines can therefore cause flu².

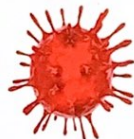
However, a flu vaccination can take up to 2 weeks to begin working⁵ so it is possible to catch flu in this period.

A flu vaccination is designed to protect you against the most common and potent strains of flu viruses circulating during the season. However, there is still a small chance you could catch a flu virus from a strain which is not included in your annual flu vaccine.

Flu vaccination does not offer protection against the common cold, so you may still catch cold viruses circulating in your community.

Why do I need a flu vaccination every year?

Influenza viruses are constantly changing and vaccines are developed to protect against the predicted strains each season so it is important to get vaccinated against the latest strains for the UK².



HELP PROTECT YOURSELF.
ASK ABOUT YOUR FLU VACCINATION HERE.




FLU VACCINATION ADVICE.

Tell the nurse before your flu vaccination if...

- You feel unwell, have a temperature, or an infection
- You are allergic to eggs
- You have had a reaction to a previous flu jab
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding
- You are allergic to any antibiotics

After you have had your flu vaccination...


- If you have a sore arm, apply a cold flannel
- If you have a headache or slight fever, drink plenty of water and painkillers may help
- If symptoms persist over 48 hours, contact your surgery



If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.

References:

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