

Good news! We're ready to offer your child the flu vaccine

How does flu affect my child?

Flu is a serious illness. Children can suffer from the same symptoms as adults including a high temperature, a nasty cough, sore throat and aching muscles. **ALL** children can get ill from flu, some will have to stay in bed for a few days, but others may have more serious effects or end up in hospital. Very sadly, every year some children die from flu.

Why is it important to get the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is the **BEST** way to protect your children from flu by helping their immune system to protect them against new flu virus strains circulating each year. Having a healthy lifestyle is great but **WON'T** stop your child getting flu, the immune system needs extra help to fight off flu.

Because the type of flu going around changes every year, your child should have the vaccine every year to make sure they are protected.

Flu spreads easily. Having the flu vaccine protects children, family and community members and also means your family is less likely to need time off school and work.

This winter, it is more important than ever to protect those most vulnerable to the flu virus and protect the NHS as we prepare for the potential risks of both flu and COVID-19.

How does my child get the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is available to all primary school aged children and those in Year 7. It's **SAFE**, **FREE** and **WON'T** give your child the flu.

Most children will be given the **nasal spray**: this is safe, easy, fast and pain free to give. The nasal spray is manufactured using porcine gelatine. This year, the **injection** will also be offered as an **alternative which does NOT contain porcine gelatine** if you do not want your child to have the nasal spray.

While the injection does not provide as much protection as the nasal spray and will not be available until **November at the earliest** if there is enough vaccine supply, it will still give children valuable protection from flu. So please take up this option if you decline the nasal spray. We want as many children as possible to have the flu vaccine this year, with the risks of flu and COVID-19 circulating at the same time.

Are there any side effects?

Serious side effects from the vaccine are very uncommon, but the vaccine can sometimes cause a mild fever which usually gets better within 48 hours. This is a common reaction, parents and carers should monitor their children but there is no need to self-isolate or get a COVID-19 test unless COVID-19 is suspected.

Social distancing and safety measures are in place in schools and community centres to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when giving the vaccine.

Please make sure that you sign and return the consent form when you receive it, to make sure your child does not miss out.

Where can I find out more?

You can find out more here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

You can also visit the Immunisation team's website at <https://eput.nhs.uk/>

The flu vaccine is the best way to make sure your child stays free from flu this winter. Take advantage of this valuable protection for your child.