

FLU

What is Flu?

As we approach the flu season it is important for those eligible to ensure that they have received their flu jab. It is also important to recognise the signs of flu and what to do should you think you have it.

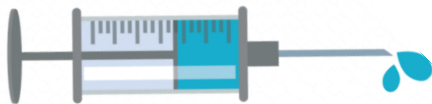


Flu is a highly infectious disease with symptoms such as fever, chills, aches and pains in the joint or muscles, headaches and extreme tiredness. Flu is actually worse than a bad cold and you may need to spend a few days in bed recovering. Although serious infections are less common in healthy adults, they can sometimes lead to hospitalisations, permanent disability and even death.

Each year the NHS prepares for the unpredictability of flu. For most healthy people, the flu is unpleasant but usually self-limiting with recovery generally within a week.

However, there is a particular risk of severe illness from catching flu for those who are:

- Pregnant
- Aged 65 or over
- Diabetic
- Have a BMI ≥ 40



Or if you have a long-term condition of the:

- Lungs, e.g. Asthma or COPD
- Heart
- Brain or nervous system
- Kidneys
- Liver
- Immune system
- No spleen

The Department of Health advise vaccination to be your best option for protection so if you're in one of the groups listed above, don't underestimate the flu – book your jab from September 2018.

What should you do before you get your flu vaccination?

Inform your surgery if:

- You have ever had a reaction to a previous flu vaccination
- You are feeling unwell or have a raised temperature
- You are allergic to hen's eggs

Please arrive in good time for your appointment. You can also help the clinic run smoothly by taking off your coat and rolling up your sleeve (on the arm you don't write with) before you are called for your vaccination.

Flu season will start in September and each year the surgery plans to vaccinate as many of our 6000 entitled patients as possible. Your pharmacist can also give you a flu jab, however unlike your surgery they will not give you other vaccinations that you may be eligible for (for example, pneumococcal or shingles).



Patients aged 70-76 (born after 01/09/1942) and 78 – 79 are entitled to a shingles vaccination. This helps protect against this painful infectious disease which can have long term effects.

We also offer pregnant women the whooping cough vaccination alongside flu which your pharmacy will not. Having the whooping cough vaccination boosts immunity in women so that the whooping cough antibodies are passed from mother and baby to protect infants in the first few months of life.

Letters + SMS invites will start to go out from September to eligible patients. If you have not received an invite and feel you may be eligible then please ask at reception.

Who is eligible?

Children Aged 4,5,6,7,9 + 9yrs - Will be vaccinated at school

Children 6m-3yrs and 10-17yrs - Will be invited by the surgery for vaccination

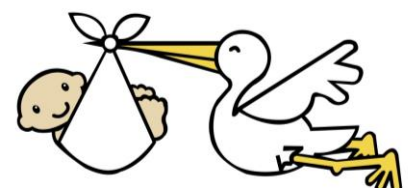
Adults 18-65> - Will be invited by the surgery for vaccination

Housebound patients will be contacted and visited by a doctor or nurse throughout the flu season.

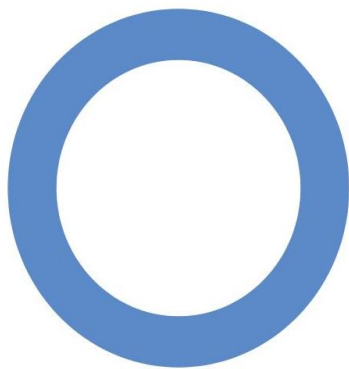
Pregnancy

Why is flu more serious in pregnancy?

During pregnancy, a woman's natural immunity to infections reduced in order for your baby to grow. This therefore means pregnant women are more susceptible to getting flu and the serious complications associated with it, such as pneumonia which can follow on.



Diabetes



Why is flu more serious for people who have diabetes?

Diabetes can have an effect on the immune system which leaves diabetics more susceptible to infections. In diabetics flu can cause blood sugars to become deranged which can lead to hospital admissions and even death.

65 and over

Why is flu serious if you're aged 65 or over?

With age the immune system weakens, leaving older people more susceptible to flu and then develop complications such as pneumonia.

65+

Asthma & COPD

Why is flu serious for people with Asthma or COPD?

Patients with lung problems like Asthma or COPD are more likely to catch flu. Flu can be more serious in people with these conditions as it is possible they will go on to develop pneumonia.



Children

Why is flu serious for children?

For most people, flu is limited to being an unpleasant disease. However, for the very young the flu can be serious.

The virus can be contracted at nursery, school or at home and it can spread easily.

By vaccinating your child against the flu you help to protect them, and make it much harder for the flu virus to spread.

For most children under the age of 18 their flu vaccination is a painless but tickly nasal spray!

