**Flu Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions**

**Where will my child receive the vaccine?**

Children in primary school and up to Year 11 in secondary school will receive their vaccine in the school setting. Children aged 2 and 3 on 31 August will receive their vaccine in the GP setting. Your child’s School or GP will contact you about getting vaccinated before the winter.

**Why are healthy children being offered flu vaccine?**

Flu is a disease that spreads very rapidly, potentially causing widespread illness, especially in those who are already vulnerable because of their age or medical condition. So, if children are vaccinated against flu, they will not only benefit directly by being protected themselves but will also reduce the spread of flu and help protect their families, older relatives and the whole population. In particular, they will help to protect those children and adults who cannot or do not have the vaccine. With the flu season rapidly approaching, it will also help to reduce pressure on the NHS and other vital services.

**Why does my child have to have the flu vaccine each year?**

There are different types of flu, known as ‘strains.’ Each year, the flu vaccine must be changed to try and match the strains you can catch that winter. It’s also more effective some years than others. This depends on whether the vaccine is a good match for the type of flu going around. Having the flu vaccine each year will give you the best chance of protection.

**Does my child have to have the flu vaccine?**

No. As with all immunisations, flu vaccinations for children are optional. However, this vaccine will help protect them from what can be an unpleasant illness, as well as stopping them spreading flu to vulnerable friends and relatives who may become seriously ill from the flu.

**What vaccine will my child receive?**

Most children will be offered the Fluenz nasal spray. This is a single spray squirted up each nostril. It is needle free, quick and painless.

**Does the nasal flu vaccine contain pork?**

Yes, the vaccine contains a highly processed form of gelatine that is derived from pigs – porcine gelatine. This gelatine helps to keep the vaccine viruses stable to ensure it provides the best protection against flu.

**Can my child have the injected flu vaccine instead of the nasal spray?**

Yes, the injectable flu vaccine is a good alternative for children who cannot have the nasal flu vaccine due to religious reasons. The injectable vaccine does not contain porcine and is safe and effective.

**Will the flu vaccine give my child flu?**

No, the nasal spray flu vaccine contains small amounts of weakened flu viruses and does not cause flu in children. The injectable flu vaccine is inactivated and cannot cause flu in those that are vaccinated.

**How does the vaccine work?**

The vaccine will help your child build up immunity to flu in a similar way as natural infection, but without symptoms. Because the main flu viruses change each year, a new flu vaccine has to be given each year.

**What if my child is unwell on the day of vaccination?**

You may be asked to wait until your child is better before having the nasal spray flu vaccine if they have a very blocked or runny nose – these might stop the vaccine getting into their system or a high temperature. Sometimes an injected vaccine may be offered instead. Catch up clinics will be available if your child does miss their vaccination.

**How long does it take for the flu vaccination to work?**

The flu vaccine takes 14 days to develop a full immune response.

**What are the side effects of the Children’s flu vaccine?**

Flu vaccines are very safe. Side effects of the nasal spray flu vaccine are mild and do not last long. They can include a runny or blocked nose, a headache, tiredness, and loss of appetite. For the injected flu vaccine, most side effects are also mild and do not last long. They can include a sore arm (or thigh) where the injection was given, a slightly raised temperature and aching muscles. Side effects for both types of vaccination usually last for 1 and 2 days.

**What if my child has a long-term health condition?**

If you have a child with a long-term health condition, you can ask the GP surgery to give them the vaccine instead of them having it at school if you prefer.

**My child is home schooled. How do they get their flu vaccination?**

Vaccination UK who delivers the school aged vaccination programme will offer catch up sessions in the community where you will be able to book an appointment for your child to be vaccinated. They can also arrange for your child to have any other school-aged vaccinations that they may have missed.

**Can my child catch the flu if they have been vaccinated?**

Having a flu vaccine is the most effective way to reduce your risk of catching flu. However, having the flu vaccine doesn’t guarantee that you won’t catch the flu. Any child who catches flu after vaccination is less likely to be seriously ill or be admitted to hospital.

**Where can I find out more information on the flu vaccine?**

For more information on the flu vaccine for children and to consent, click the following links:

[**Child flu vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)**](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/)

[**Flu vaccinaton in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-in-schools?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=e2a30e39-0eaf-4664-bc66-10af57e87fc2&utm_content=daily)

[**Vaccines and porcine gelatine - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccines-and-porcine-gelatine)

[**Vaccination UK Immunisation (schoolvaccination.uk)**](https://midlands.schoolvaccination.uk/flu/2024/wolverhampton)