

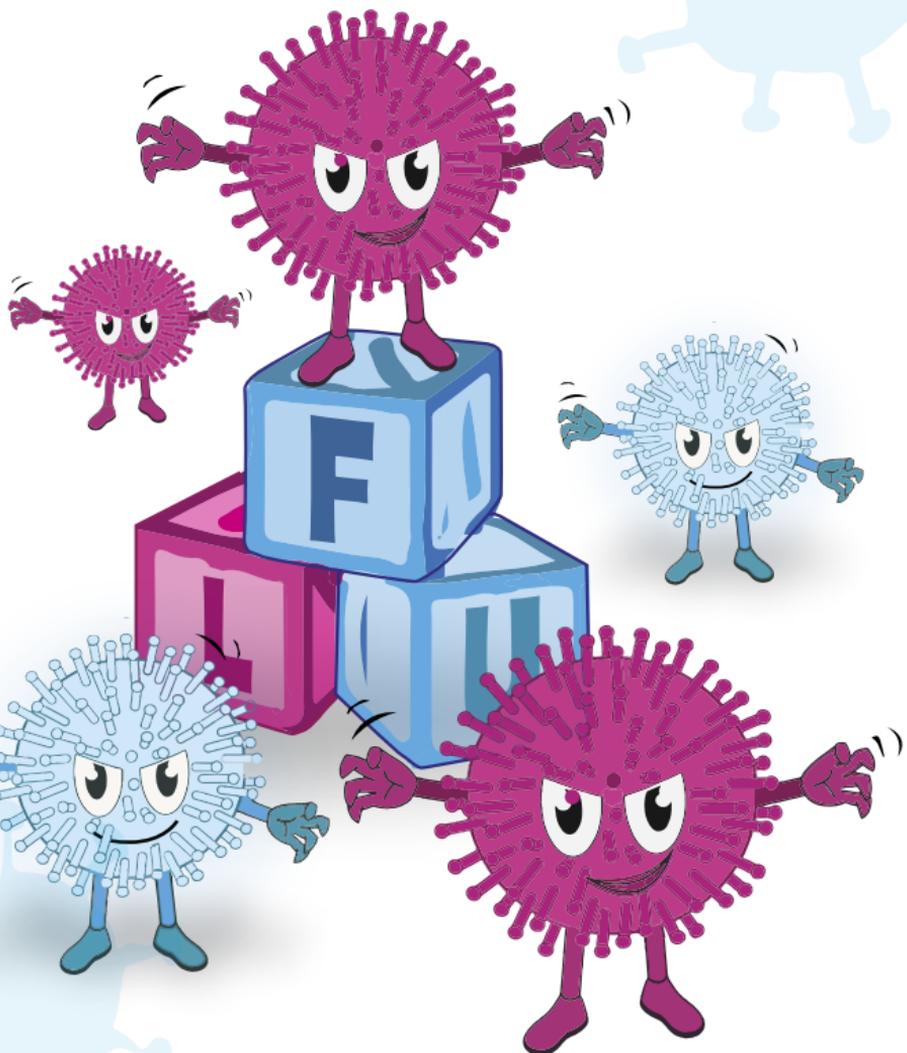


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FLU

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

**Flu vaccination for
children in 2016**





In 2016, all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August and those in reception class or school years 1, 2 and 3 will be offered a nasal spray flu vaccine to help protect them from flu.

Why do children need to be protected from flu?

Flu is caused by viruses and spreads easily. Anyone can get flu but rates of infection are highest among children. It can cause fever, chills, aching muscles, headache, tiredness, blocked nose, cough and a sore throat, lasting up to a week.

Often children who get flu feel very unwell and need a few days in bed, and for some it can cause serious illness. Complications include bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections. Some children get so ill they need to be admitted to hospital.

Children at highest risk of becoming very ill with flu, such as those with health conditions like diabetes, heart or lung disease, have been offered an annual flu vaccination for many years.

How does flu vaccine help?

Flu vaccine, especially the nasal spray for children, usually offers good protection against flu in the season it is given.

Protection starts around two weeks after having it. Some people still get flu even after having the vaccine but often with milder symptoms. Flu vaccines do not protect against colds and other winter illnesses.

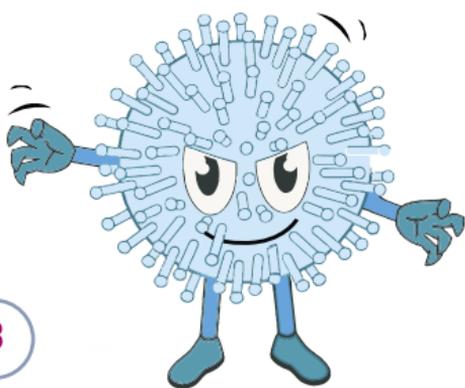
Flu vaccination gives children protection from flu and also helps to stop it spreading.

Which children will be offered a flu vaccine in 2016?

All children aged 2 and 3 years on 31 August and those in reception class or school years 1, 2 and 3 will be offered a flu vaccine. For most children the flu vaccine will be given as a spray up the nose.

In Wales, since 2013, more children have been offered a flu vaccine each year, and this number continues to grow.

All children aged 6 months and over, at increased risk of becoming very ill with flu due to a health condition, will continue to be offered flu vaccination every year.



What kind of flu vaccine is given to children?

Most children can have a nasal spray vaccine which is given as a fine mist up the nose. A small number of children can't have the spray vaccine. They will be offered an injection instead, given in the arm.

The nasal spray vaccine is not recommended for anyone who is:

- Under 2 years of age.
- Aged 18 years of age or older.
- Pregnant.
- On long-term aspirin (salicylate) treatment.
- Taking steroid tablets (currently, or in the last 2 weeks) or high dose steroid inhalers.
- In close contact with someone who has a weakened immune system (e.g. after a bone marrow transplant) and is being nursed in a protected environment.

Or anyone who has:

- Previously required intensive care for a severe allergy to eggs.
- A weakened immune system.
- A wheezy chest on the day of the vaccination or in the previous 3 days.
- Increased the use of their asthma inhalers in the previous 3 days.

Are there any children who should not have a flu vaccine?

There are very few children who cannot have a flu vaccine at all. Children who have previously had a serious allergic reaction to a flu vaccine (or any part of it) should not have that flu vaccine again. Children who are unwell with a high temperature should delay the vaccination until they are better.

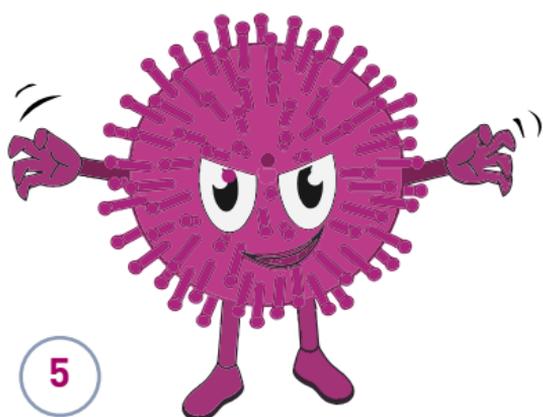
A cough, cold or other minor illness is not a reason to delay vaccination.

How often is the flu vaccine needed?

A flu vaccine is needed every year to give the best protection. As flu viruses can change each year, the vaccine is changed to match them.

Can the flu vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes, flu vaccines can be given at the same time as other vaccines. If a child misses their flu vaccination, then speak to the school nurse, health visitor, practice nurse or GP about getting their vaccine.



Are there any side effects from the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are very safe. Some children get a slight temperature, feel tired, have a headache, aching muscles or reduced appetite for a day or two after having a flu vaccine. The nasal spray may cause a runny or blocked nose. The injection can leave a sore arm. Other reactions are less common.

After the nasal spray flu vaccine, it is best to avoid contact for 1–2 weeks with anyone whose immune system is very weak, such as someone who has recently had a bone marrow transplant. This is best discussed with your doctor or nurse before the vaccine is given.

Flu vaccination is quick and safe and could prevent weeks of serious illness.

Will the flu vaccine cause flu?

No, the flu vaccine will not cause flu.

Does the nasal spray vaccine contain gelatine?

Yes, the nasal spray vaccine contains traces of highly purified gelatine (porcine gelatine) which is also used in a range of essential medicines. The nasal spray vaccine offers the best protection against flu particularly in young children. The flu injection is available as an alternative for children in clinical risk groups only.

Do I need to do anything?

Children who are 2 or 3 years old on 31 August 2016 will have their flu vaccine at their GP surgery.

Children in reception class or school years 1, 2 and 3 will be sent information and a consent form by the school. These children will have their flu vaccine in school.

Please read the information and return the signed form to school as soon as possible.

The parents of children aged 4 years old on 31 August who are not in school should contact their GP.

For children in other age groups at increased risk of complications from flu, the vaccine will be available through their GP surgery.

For the best protection the flu vaccine should be given in the early autumn before there are any outbreaks of flu. It can still be given later in the year, but early autumn is best.

Is the nasal spray a new vaccine?

No. Millions of doses of the nasal spray vaccine have been given in countries around the world over the last 10 years, particularly in America.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.beatflu.org



You can find out more about the vaccine, including vaccine contents and potential side effects, at www.medicines.org.uk/emc/ by entering the name of the vaccine in the search box and looking at the patient information leaflet (PIL).

A schedule showing which immunisations are routinely offered in Wales is available from www.publichealthwales.org/routine-immunisation-schedule-wales

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor, nurse, health visitor or school nurse. Or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk



To order more copies of this leaflet email: hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk or telephone 0845 606 4050.

This leaflet is produced by:

Public Health Division, Welsh Government and Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme, Public Health Wales

