

Information about flu vaccination for children

The flu vaccine for most children is a nasal spray. It will help protect them and the people close to them against flu. It's easy for you to make sure they get it, all you need to do is fill in the electronic consent form which will be sent to you via a link from your child's school approximately 3 weeks prior to the immunisation session.

Flu is serious

Flu spreads easily, and with society getting back to normal it is likely that flu rates will be higher this year alongside circulating COVID-19. People of any age can get flu, but children have the highest rate of infection, and flu can be serious for them. Complications can include bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections. Some children get so ill they need to be admitted to hospital. You can read more about flu and possible complications here: www.phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine.

Benefits of the nasal spray flu vaccine for children

Flu vaccine helps protect children from flu and also helps stop them spreading it to family and friends. Some children can still get flu after having the vaccine but the infection is usually milder. The vaccine is a simple painless nasal spray, which gives them better protection than a flu injection. Your child will have their maximum protection starting around two weeks after having their vaccine.

Flu vaccines are safe

Over the years, millions of children in the UK have had the nasal spray flu vaccine and it has been shown to be very safe. The flu vaccine cannot cause flu. Like all medicines, the nasal spray flu vaccine may cause side effects for some children. Common side effects include: a runny or blocked nose, a slight temperature, tiredness, a headache, a reduced appetite or aching muscles for a day or two after the vaccine. You can report any side effects online at: coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/ or via the Yellow Card app. The flu vaccine will be provided in a COVID-19 safe environment.

There are very few reasons for children to miss out on their flu vaccine

It is perfectly safe for your child to have the flu vaccine if they have a cold or minor illness on the day.

Your child should NOT have the vaccine IF:

- have had a serious allergic reaction to the vaccine or any part of it;
- are on long-term aspirin (salicylate) treatment;
- have needed intensive care following a severe allergic reaction to eggs or egg products;
- have had oral steroids in the past 14 days;
- have a wheezy chest on the day of the vaccination or in the previous three days;
- have increased the use of their asthma inhaler in the last three days;
- have a condition or treatment that weakens their immune system; or
- are in close contact with someone who has a very weakened immune system and needs to be isolated (for example, after a bone marrow transplant).

If your child cannot have the nasal spray because of one of these reasons, they will be offered a flu vaccine injection instead, and the school nurse will advise you on this.

The nasal spray vaccine is best for children, and like some other medicines it contains traces of highly purified porcine gelatine. If this is an issue for them, it doesn't mean your child should miss out, you can request a gelatine-free flu vaccine injection from their GP surgery. For a full list of the vaccine ingredients, visit this website: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/ and enter 'Fluenc Tetra' into the search box.

For more information about flu visit www.phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine