DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR CHILD'S FREE FLU VACCINE;

so they don't miss out on their fun

The NHS offers a free flu vaccine for children aged 2-16 years old

Find out more



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Patient Information Forum

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The PIF TICK is the independent trust mark for health information. This lets you know information is evidence-based, up-to-date and easy to use and understand.

FLU CAN MEAN MISSED MOMENTS FOR EVERYONE

The flu affects children of all ages in many different ways. It can often be very unpleasant for children and their families. Most children with the flu will need to rest at home for many days. This means they miss out on school, nursery, or their other activities. Parents and caregivers often have to take time off work to look after them.

Children can pass the flu to others very easily. They might give it to their parents, brothers and sisters, or grandparents, who can get more seriously ill.

The flu vaccine can help protect your child and others from getting very ill.



THE FLU VACCINE HELPS MAKE SURE CHILDREN DO NOT MISS OUT

The NHS offers a free flu vaccine for children aged 2-16 years old. It is given as a quick, painless spray up the nose.

Speak to your school or healthcare team to check if the nasal spray vaccine is the right option to help protect your child from the flu.

For some children, the nasal spray vaccine might not be the right option. In these cases, a free injectable flu vaccine should be offered.



FLU CAN HIT KIDS HARD AND FAST

Flu symptoms may seem like a cold, but the flu can affect the body in quite a different way

The flu can make children feel very unwell, very quickly.

The flu can also last longer in children than in adults.

Every winter in the UK, thousands of children get so sick with the flu that they have to go to hospital.

That is why the NHS provides the flu vaccine free each year to help protect children from the serious effects of the flu.

The nasal spray vaccine will help protect against the flu, not the common cold. This is because they are two different viruses. It is important to know the difference between a cold and the flu in your child.



KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FLU AND A COLD

	Flu	Common cold
How long do symptoms take to appear?	Appears quickly within a few hours	Appears gradually
What are the symptoms?	Flu symptoms affect more than just your nose and throat, including: • a sudden fever • an aching body • feeling tired or exhausted • a dry cough • a sore throat • a headache • difficulty sleeping • loss of appetite • diarrhoea or tummy pain • feeling and being sick • ear pain	Cold symptoms mainly affect your nose and throat, including: • a blocked or runny nose • a sore throat • headaches • coughs • sneezing • a raised temperature • pressure in your ears and face
How unwell can someone feel?	Exhausted and too unwell to carry out normal activities	Unwell, but OK to carry on as normal
Does the flu vaccination help to protect against it?	✓	✗

THE FLU VACCINE HELPS YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNE SYSTEM FIGHT FLU

The flu vaccine strengthens immunity against the flu virus

The vaccine has the small, weakened part of the virus, but does not give you the flu. This helps your child's body make antibodies that help to fight the flu.

This strengthens natural immunity, meaning they are less likely to catch the flu. If your child does still get the flu, the vaccine makes the symptoms milder.

Why does my child need a flu vaccine every year?

There are many types of the flu virus. The most common one changes each year. Scientists match the vaccine with the most common flu virus that year. This is based on advice from the World Health Organization (WHO). This is why the NHS recommends your child gets a flu vaccine every year.

Every year since 2013, the NHS has offered the nasal spray flu vaccine to children. It is part of the Childhood Flu National Immunisation programme.



WHERE TO GET THE CHILD FLU VACCINE

All children aged 2-16 can get the flu vaccine free from September

Children aged 2 and 3 years old can get a free nasal spray flu vaccine at their GP or from some pharmacies. If you did not get a text or a letter, speak with your GP or pharmacist.

School aged children can get a free nasal spray flu vaccine in school. If you did not get a consent letter or email from your school, contact the school.

An alternative injectable flu vaccine is available if the nasal spray is not suitable

What if my child misses vaccination day at school?

If your child misses the flu vaccination day at school, they can still get their free flu vaccine. The school may offer a 'catch up' day. They may also be able to get it at their GP. Speak with your healthcare team to find out more.



THE FLU VACCINE IS A QUICK, PAINLESS SPRAY UP THE NOSE

We know some children may feel nervous about needles, and this can make them not want to get a vaccine. The good news is that this vaccine is given as a nasal spray. This means there are no needles involved. Your child can have flu protection without the injection.

If the nasal spray flu vaccine is not suitable for your child, an injectable flu vaccine is available.



HOW IT IS GIVEN

The nasal spray vaccination is fast and gentle. Many say it will feel like a tickle in the nose. Here's what you and your child can expect



1

The nasal spray flu vaccine is given in a few simple steps.



2

The nurse or healthcare professional places the tip of a thin plastic tube just inside the nostril.



3

The flu vaccine is sprayed into the first nostril.



4

The other half of the dose is sprayed into the other nostril promptly.

5

The child can breathe normally while the vaccine is being administered - there is no need to actively inhale or sniff in.



WORRIED ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

Millions of children in the UK get the flu vaccine through this programme every year. Most children feel fine after the nasal spray flu vaccine. Like many medicines, there may be some side effects. But these side effects are minor compared to getting the flu.



If your child has any side effects, they are likely to be mild and short term.

Most common side effects include:

- **Feeling weak**
- **Having a reduced appetite**
- **Having a runny or stuffy nose**

For a full list of side effects, you can visit

If your child gets any side effects, talk to your school or healthcare team. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at

www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard

or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of the medicines.



If you have not got a letter, text, or email about this year's flu vaccine, speak with your child's school or GP

For more information on flu and the flu vaccine, as well as information in other languages visit **www.sharegoodtimesnotflu.co.uk**.
An AstraZeneca website for the UK public.

The NHS website also has helpful information about the children's flu vaccine. You can find this at **www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine**.

If you would like to share feedback on this material, please visit **https://qr.short.az/flufeedback**

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Thank you to the parents who have reviewed and provided feedback on this leaflet.