

Who is eligible for the free flu vaccination?

Even if you feel healthy you should have the free flu vaccination if you are:

From 1 September 2026:

- pregnant women
- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2026
- primary school aged children (from Reception to Year 6)
- secondary school aged children (from Year 7 to Year 11)
- all children in clinical risk groups aged 6 months to less than 18 years
- anyone 17 years and over attending an SEN school and who are in a clinical risk group

From October 2026, to be confirmed by NHS England in due course:

- Those aged 65 years and over, those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups (as defined by the [Green Book, Influenza chapter 19](#))
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline workers in a social care setting without an employer led occupational health scheme including those working for a registered residential care or nursing home, registered domiciliary care providers, voluntary managed hospice providers and those that are employed by those who receive direct payments (personal budgets) or Personal Health budgets, such as Personal Assistants

How do I get the flu vaccine?

The vaccine is most effective if given in September to November but can still be effective in December and January. If you fit the above criteria speak to your GP to book a vaccination appointment. Also those eligible for the free flu vaccination can attend *most* local pharmacies who will also provide the vaccination.

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

Yes. The flu vaccine can be given at the same time as all routine childhood vaccines.

We have heard that Fluenz®- the children's nasal vaccine, contains ingredients that come from pork – is this true?

The nasal flu vaccine does contain hydrolysed gelatine derived from pork as one of its additives. Gelatine is commonly used in a range of pharmaceutical products, including capsules. The gelatine used in Fluenz® is a highly purified product used to stabilise live viral vaccines. This year children have the option of the injectable flu vaccine if preferred.

Complications of flu

The most common complication of flu is a bacterial [chest infection](#), such as [bronchitis](#). Occasionally, this can become serious and develop into [pneumonia](#) and even death.

There is no point having the flu jab as it didn't work last year.

Each year the strain match is highly effective, however, on rare occasions the strain may change slightly, the vaccine will still be highly effective in minimising the severity of the flu virus if this ever occurs.

Having the flu vaccine gives you flu

No, it doesn't. The injected flu vaccine that is given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses, so it can't give you flu. Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards and shouldn't mistake these symptoms for flu, but other reactions are very rare. This is your body building up antibodies.

Flu can be treated with antibiotics

No, it can't. Viruses cause flu, and antibiotics only work against bacteria. A bacterial infection may occur as a result of having the flu, in which case you may be given antibiotics.

I never get ill so I don't need the flu vaccine

The flu virus can attack anyone, of any age, at any time including fit and healthy people. It does not discriminate! A healthy individual can catch the flu and become very poorly affecting them for a long period of time, leaving them unable to work.

Once you've had the flu vaccine, you're protected for life

No, you are not. The viruses that cause flu can change every year, so you need a vaccination each year that matches the new viruses. The vaccine usually provides protection for the duration of the flu season that year.

I'm pregnant, so I shouldn't have the flu jab because it will affect my baby

You should have the vaccine whatever stage of pregnancy you are in. If you're pregnant, you could get seriously ill if you get flu, which could also be bad for your baby, and in some cases cause premature birth. Having the vaccine can also protect your baby against flu after they're born and during the early months of life.

Complications of RSV - RSV can be especially dangerous for infants and the elderly, older adults can also be at risk of severe RSV lung infections, and the virus is a cause of illness and mortality. The vaccine is about **82% effective** at stopping RSV hospital admissions in older adults.

It lowers the risk of severe RSV in babies by **58% to 72%** (if given at least two weeks before birth).

You are now a Flu Champion!

What does the mean?

Flu Champion Check List/Guidance

All Staff are to wear the Flu Pin Badge (if available), in a visual area, throughout - The Flu Season (September – March).

All Staff will have access to the up to date 'Flu Facts and Myths' check list either as a printed off copy or e-copy, for reference and consistency of the flu message.

When engaging an eligible resident/patient, please take the opportunity to encourage the yearly flu vaccination to protect them from flu.

The Fact and Myths sheet should provide you with the answers to any questions your clients may have.

Managers **MUST** collect ALL the pin badges from their staff and store for the following flu season campaign. Staff members are requested to look after their badge and return to their Manager.

The Health Protection Team will send you an annual 'reminder' when it is the time of year to think about flu again and display the pin badge!

If we all got one person to get the flu vaccination we could make a difference!

Further advice on the flu vaccination can be found on NHS Choices.

Thank you!

Protect yourself and others - be a flu fighter, get your flu jab !

