

2023 edition

Given as
a painless
nasal spray

Flu vaccine

for secondary school pupils



Public Health 
Scotland



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Flu can be serious


The flu vaccine is being offered to all secondary school pupils in Scotland. It's normally given at school between September and December.

NHS Scotland recommends you get your flu vaccine this year. This is for three reasons:

1. Flu can be serious, even for healthy young people.
2. The flu vaccine helps prevent you getting sick with flu and needing time off school and activities.
3. The flu vaccine is an easy, painless and safe way to help protect yourself this winter.



**Given as
a painless
nasal spray**



You'll receive a consent form from school. It's important you talk about this with your parent or carer and complete and return the consent form to school.

**Scan to find out
about the flu vaccine**



What is flu?



- Influenza – what we call flu – is an infectious virus and can be serious.
- When people cough or sneeze, the flu virus spreads through the air. We can then catch flu by touching surfaces where it has landed, then touching our eyes, nose or mouth.
- It can cause us to be seriously unwell and we usually catch flu from someone who already has it.
- Every year in Scotland, people are hospitalised for the treatment of flu or its complications.

Symptoms of flu

Flu symptoms are worse than a normal cold and may include:

- stuffy nose, dry cough and sore throat
- fever and chills
- aching muscles and joints
- headaches
- extreme tiredness.

These symptoms can last between two and seven days. You may have a very high temperature, sometimes without other obvious symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment.

How do I protect myself from flu?

The flu vaccine is an easy, painless and safe way to protect yourself from flu. It will also help reduce the risk of spreading it to friends and family who are more at risk from flu, like grandparents or people with health conditions.

The flu vaccine

How is the flu vaccine given?

Most school pupils will be given the flu vaccine as a nasal (nose) spray into each nostril. It's quick and painless and there is no need to sniff or inhale the vaccine. It will just feel like a tickle in the nose. You can watch a video about how the flu vaccine is given at [nhsinform.scot/childflu](https://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu)



The nasal spray flu vaccine contains a highly processed form of gelatine (pork gelatine), which is used in many essential medicines. The gelatine helps to keep the vaccine viruses stable so that the vaccine provides the best protection against flu.

Many faith groups, including Muslim and Jewish communities, have approved the use of vaccines containing gelatine.

The nasal spray flu vaccine is a more effective vaccine than the injected flu vaccine and is the preferred option. If you do not accept the use of pork gelatine in medical products, you can ask for the vaccine to be given as an injection in the arm instead. You can do this by ticking the appropriate box on the consent form.

Is the vaccine safe?

The flu vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. The nasal spray flu vaccine has been used safely since 2014 and millions of doses have been given to school pupils in the UK.

Are there any side effects?

As with all vaccines, side effects of the flu vaccine are possible but they are usually mild. They may include:



headache



muscle aches



runny or
blocked nose

Less common side effects include a nosebleed after the nasal spray flu vaccine.

If you get the vaccine as an injection in the arm, there may be a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm afterwards. If you do experience any of these side effects, they usually go away after a couple of days and you do not need to do anything about them. These side effects are much less serious than getting flu.

Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card Scheme at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard, by using the Yellow Card app, or by calling **0800 731 6789**.



This information is a guide only. Always get medical advice from NHS24 free on 111 if you're worried about your health.



How does the vaccine work?

In previous years the flu vaccine has worked very well, providing protection against flu. It has also reduced the chance of spreading flu into the wider community.

The annual vaccine offers protection against the most common types of flu virus that are around each winter. It should start to protect most children about 10 to 14 days after they receive their vaccination.

Are there any reasons not to have the nasal spray flu vaccine?

- The nasal spray flu vaccine may not be suitable for some pupils with severe asthma who regularly need oral steroids for asthma control. Speak to the nurse if you have any questions about this.
- If you have a severely weakened immune system, are getting treatment for cancer or you've had a transplant.
- If you live with someone who needs isolation because they're severely immunosuppressed, meaning they have a very weak immune system.

I have an egg allergy. Can I have the nasal spray flu vaccine?

If you have an egg allergy, you can safely have the nasal spray vaccine, unless you've had a life-threatening reaction to eggs and spent time in hospital.

What if I'm feeling unwell before getting the flu vaccine?

You should delay getting the vaccine if you're very unwell (for example with a fever, diarrhoea or vomiting) on the day of your vaccination.

If you have asthma and your symptoms are worse than usual in the three days before your vaccination, meaning you are wheezing more or have had to use your inhaler more than you normally do, tell the immunisation nurse at your appointment. There is no need to delay your vaccination, and you should be offered an alternative injectable form of the vaccine.



Please make sure you list all medications you are taking on the consent form. All consent forms will be checked by the nurse before you get your vaccine.





Can I get flu from the vaccine?

You cannot get flu from the flu vaccine. It helps you build up immunity to flu.

If you do not get the vaccine, you're not at risk of catching flu from others who have had the flu vaccine. You do not need to stay off school when the vaccine is being given or in the following weeks.

Does the flu vaccine give protection for life?

No, you have to get vaccinated every year because flu viruses are constantly changing. A different vaccine has to be made every year to ensure the best protection against flu.

How do I get my flu vaccine?

Show your parent or carer this leaflet. Talk to them about getting the flu vaccine. It's a decision you should make together.

You should have been given a consent form with this leaflet, which your parent or carer is asked to sign and return to your school even if you're not going to have the vaccine.

If you did not get a consent form, speak to your school as soon as possible.

We recommend you get agreement from your parent or carer, but it is not always necessary. For information on young people's right to consent visit nhsinform.scot/vaccineconsentyoungpeople

Child Health Programme - School

Flu immunisation consent form
For primary and secondary school pupils

To be completed by parents/carers for:

Name: _____
DOB: _____
Gender: _____
Home address: _____
School: _____
School ref: _____
Class or Club ref: _____
GP practice name: _____

Please check the information above and other circumstances before, if appropriate, if your child has changed, please inform your GP.

Change of name/parent as: _____
Change of school: _____
Change of home address: _____
Postcode: _____

To be completed by the school

Complete this consent form, sign and return to school even if you do not want your child to be immunised.
Secondary school pupils will be reminded after giving their own consent following discussion with the school nurse, even if this form not returned.
If you need help completing this consent form, visit www.nhs.uk/immunisation or call the NHS helpline on 0800 595 0003.

This consent section must be completed by parent/carer (tick box) if you complete questions 1 and 2. Yes No

This consent section may be completed by secondary school pupil if understood about the immunisation and give my consent. Yes No

If completing, you must answer all of the following questions. See back for further information.

1. Has your child ever been admitted to an intensive care unit as an emergency for: Yes No
Stop allergy? Yes No
Severe asthma? Yes No

2. Please indicate any other health condition your child has that requires medication you must be taking before or after school. It will be assumed your child has no medicine condition and is not taking any regular medication. Yes No

Parent/carer consent (please print)
Parent/carer signature: _____ Date: _____
Secondary school pupil signature: _____ Date: _____

The flu vaccine will be given as a nasal spray to this child's health protection. Religious groups have approval for our use (indicated by asterisk in the text on this leaflet).
If your child has asthma, please refer over. Yes No

Version No: _____

ALXXXXXXXXX our records show whether for immunisation history by:

Course Given/Ref'd No.	Date Given	Course Given/Ref'd No.	Date Given

Scan to find out about vaccine consent for young people



What if I miss my vaccine?

If you miss it, for whatever reason, ask your parent or carer to contact your local NHS Board to find out how to get your vaccine at another time. You'll find the number on your letter, or visit [nhsinform.scot/childflu](https://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu)

Further information

Visit [nhsinform.scot/childflu](https://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu). You can also talk to your school health or immunisation team, practice nurse or GP.



When to immunise	Diseases protected against	Vaccine given
8 weeks old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B (HepB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-in-one (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotavirus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotavirus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meningitis B (MenB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MenB
12 weeks old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, Hib and HepB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-in-one (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pneumococcal disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pneumococcal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotavirus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotavirus
16 weeks old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, Hib and HepB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-in-one (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meningitis B (MenB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MenB
Between 12 and 13 months old – within a month of the first birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hib and meningitis C (MenC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hib/MenC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pneumococcal disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pneumococcal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meningitis B (MenB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MenB
Every year from age 2 until the end of secondary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenza (flu) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu
3 years 4 months old or soon after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four-in-one (DTaP/IPV or dTaP/IPV)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMR (check first dose has been given)
11 to 13 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) including cervical cancer (in women) and some head and neck, and anogenital cancers (in men and women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPV
Around 14 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tetanus, diphtheria and polio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Td/IPV, and check MMR status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meningitis ACWY (MenACWY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MenACWY

Correct at the time of printing, but subject to change. For the most up-to-date timetable visit:

nhsinform.scot/immunisation



Translations



Easy read



BSL



Audio



Large print



Braille

For more information, including other formats and translation support:



www.nhsinform.scot/childfluleaflets



0800 030 8013



phs.otherformats@phs.scot



Information correct at time of publication. Please visit www.nhsinform.scot/childflu for the latest information.

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Committed to clearer
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