

Nasal Flu



The flu vaccine for children is given as a single dose of nasal spray squirted up each nostril. Not only is it needle-free, the nasal spray works even better than the injected flu vaccine with fewer side effects. It's quick and painless and will mean your child is less likely to become ill if they come into contact with the flu virus.

Why are children being offered the flu vaccine?

Flu can be very unpleasant for children. They have the same symptoms as adults – including fever, chills, aching muscles, headache, stuffy nose, dry cough and sore throat lasting up to a week. Some children develop a very high fever or complications of flu such as bronchitis, pneumonia and painful middle ear infection. They may need hospital treatment, and very occasionally a child may die from flu. For children with long-term health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, heart or lung disease, getting flu can be very serious as they are more at risk of developing serious complications.

Are there children who shouldn't have the flu vaccine?

You should let us know if your child has any of the following:

- A very severe allergy to eggs, egg proteins, gentamicin or gelatine – it is important for us to know if your child has been admitted to hospital with a condition called anaphylaxis, triggered by these things.
 - If your child is wheezy when we are due to be in school, or if they have been wheezy in the past 72 hours with asthma. There is an alternative flu vaccine that we can talk to you about to ensure that your child is protected as soon as possible.
- Have a condition that severely weakens their immune system.

Also, children who have been vaccinated should avoid close contact with people with very severely weakened immune systems for around two weeks following vaccination. This is because there's an extremely remote chance that the vaccine virus may be passed to them.

Contact with other healthy children or adults does not need to be limited after having the vaccine.

How does the flu vaccine for children work?

The nasal spray vaccine contains flu viruses that have been weakened to stop them causing flu. It will help your child build up immunity to flu in a similar way as natural infection (but without the symptoms).

Because the main flu viruses change each year, a new nasal spray vaccine has to be given each year, in the same way as the injectable flu vaccine. Most children only need a single dose of the nasal spray.

Is the flu vaccine safe for children?

The flu vaccine for children has a very good safety profile. It's been widely used in the US for more than 10 years and no safety concerns have been raised so far.

Are there any side effects of the vaccine?

The nasal spray flu vaccine has very few possible side effects:

- decreased appetite
 - headache
- a runny or blocked nose
- sometimes a raised temperature

These are common, but they pass quickly and can be treated with paracetamol or ibuprofen if you feel your child needs it.

What are the rare side effects from the nasal flu vaccination?

As with all vaccines, there's a very small chance of a severe allergic reaction (known medically as anaphylaxis). The overall rate of anaphylaxis after vaccination is around one in 900,000, so slightly more common than one in a million.

Anaphylaxis is very serious but it can be treated with adrenaline. When it happens, it normally does so within a few minutes of the vaccination.

Staff who give vaccinations have all been trained to spot and deal with anaphylactic reactions and children recover completely with treatment.

We do not eat pork products. Can my child have a different flu vaccine?

Yes. There is a flu vaccine available, in the form of an injection.

The nasal flu vaccine is the best vaccine for children and young people under 18 years of age as it is more effective at stopping the spread of flu and it is painless, but it does have a highly processed form of gelatine (porcine gelatine), which is used in a range of many essential medicines. The gelatine helps to keep the vaccine viruses stable so that the vaccine provides the best protection against flu.

If your faith or beliefs mean you would prefer a vaccine that has no pork (porcine gelatine) in it, please complete the consent for the flu injection only. You do not need to complete a form for both.

If your child is vegan, please note that the flu injection is a cell based vaccine. The cell-based vaccine manufacturing process used to make the flu injection uses a kidney cell line to grow the influenza virus. The original cells in this cell line were kidney cells taken from an adult dog in 1958. This is the cell line that is still used today so the cell-based manufacturing process does not require any new cells to be taken.

When will my child receive the vaccine?

We do our very best to see as many schools as we can, as early in the autumn as possible, but it is impossible to visit every school within a few weeks. We operate community clinics for the whole flu season in every area, so please call your local team if you would prefer to book your child in to one of these. We rotate the timetable of school visits each flu season so that all schools are treated fairly.

PLEASE NOTE:

The flu vaccine will **NOT** be available to otherwise healthy children after **December 15th** at all. If your child cannot be vaccinated in school before that date, please book a clinic appointment.

You can find details of catch up clinics [here](#).

Why does Vaccination UK need me to complete a consent if I do not want my child to have the vaccine?

We are obliged to offer the vaccine to every eligible child in your area. If we do not receive a consent or decline, we are unsure of your wishes and will continue to attempt to make contact to offer the vaccine. Completing the consent is the clearest way of making your wishes known, and means we are less likely to get in contact with you once you have declined the vaccine.

Why do I get a consent form every year? Why can I not opt in or opt out once?

We are required to offer your child the vaccine every year. Therefore, we must ask for your consent every flu season.

Why are you asking if my child has had 2 doses of the MMR?

We have had measles outbreaks in recent years, and this disease still circulates in the community. For full protection against measles, mumps and rubella, 2 doses of the MMR vaccine are needed. These are usually given at 1 year of age and then again in pre-school (before 5 years of age).

NHS England have asked us to offer the vaccine to anyone whose child has not had two doses of the MMR, to provide protection against these diseases for any children who may not have this, and prevent further outbreaks. This is why we ask this question.

How will I know when you will be in school to vaccinate my child?

We book vaccination session dates in advance of the flu season, so your school will usually have a date long before the visit. However, on occasion, we may have to change this date. We try very hard not to do this, but sometimes it is unavoidable. We will always tell the school when we are going to be back in again for another



More Nasal Flu Vaccine FAQs

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/child-flu-vaccine-questions-and-answers.aspx>

Find NHS information on the children's nasal flu vaccine here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/> and

Find University of Oxford Vaccine Knowledge Project information here:

<http://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/nasal-flu-vaccine>

Watch the Flu Heroes – Nasal Flu Spray video on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/jjHWwm8NQUw>

Protecting Your Child Against Flu:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431953/9312_PHE_Protecting_Child_Flu_DL_10_web.pdf

Vaccine Knowledge:

<http://www.ovg.ox.ac.uk/vaccine-knowledge-home>

Oxford Academic Health Science Network Flu page:

<http://www.oxfordahsn.org/our-work/clinical-networks/children/childrens-flu-information-and-immunisation-201516/zone-1-parents-and-children/>

Vaccine Information

For information about the vaccines we provide, click on a link below:



DTP & Meningitis ACWY

Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio teenage booster vaccine

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Infant BCG

Protection (up to 80%) against severe forms of childhood TB, such as TB meningitis

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HPV

The HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccination protects against cervical cancer

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