

Are there any children who shouldn't have the nasal vaccine?

Children should not have the vaccine if they are:

- severely asthmatic
- wheezy on the vaccination day
- allergic to eggs or any part of the vaccine* or
- 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 because there's an extremely remote chance that the vaccine virus may be passed to them.

Some parents and carers may have concerns about the vaccine because it contains traces of gelatin derived from pigs. There is an injected flu vaccine but, because it's not as effective as the nasal one, it's only available for high risk children who can't have the nasal vaccine for medical reasons. If you are concerned, speak to your GP to decide on the best way to protect your child.

Has the vaccine been used in other countries?

Yes; it has been used safely and successfully in America for many years.

What will happen next?

Your GP or child's school will contact you about the vaccination. Talk to your GP, practice nurse, your child's school nurse or your health visitor if you have any further questions. Or you can visit www.nhs.uk/child-flu

*search the web for 'Fluenz PIL'

5 reasons to get your child vaccinated

- There's now a safe and effective nasal spray vaccine to protect children aged two years and older against flu
- The vaccine is easy to give and painless and has been used safely in other countries for a number of years
- Flu can be a nasty illness that can lead to a stay in hospital, especially for children with other medical conditions like heart disease and diabetes
- If your child gets flu they won't be able to go to school/nursery for several days and will need to be cared for at home. You may have to take time off to look after them
- Protecting your child can stop the flu spreading to other children he/she may come into contact with, and to the rest of the family, in particular to grandparents, who may be at particular risk from flu



© Crown copyright 2013
2901249 2p 50k Nov13
Produced by Williams Lea
for Public Health England
www.nhs.uk/child-flu

Protecting your child against flu

Information for the parents of all two- and three-year-olds and of children living in areas offering the flu vaccination in primary schools



This year, two- and three-year-olds are being offered a vaccine against flu.

This is the first age-group to get the vaccine as part of a programme that aims to protect all children aged two to 16 years. To see how best to do this, in certain areas of the country, all children aged two years up to the final year of primary school will be offered the vaccine this winter.

This leaflet explains why this is happening as well as describing the disease and the vaccine.

Why are children being offered the flu vaccine?

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children causing fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and extreme tiredness, often lasting for several days. Some children can also get a very high fever, sometimes without the usual flu symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment. Complications of flu can include bronchitis, pneumonia, and a painful ear infection – these may be very severe.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

Having the vaccine will help protect your child from what can be a very nasty illness and reduce the chance of others in your family getting it. You will also avoid having to take time out because you are ill or looking after your sick child.

Why is the vaccine limited this year to certain age groups?

The children's flu vaccination programme is being introduced in stages. This year it will be offered to children aged two or three years on 1 September 2013 and to some primary school children in certain areas. Children with long term health conditions are already offered an annual flu vaccination.

Why is the vaccine for primary school children only offered in certain areas?

Vaccinating all children aged two to 16 years will require millions of appointments during a short period of time. We need to find the best way of doing this, so in certain areas of the country older children will be offered the vaccine as well. If your child is invited to have the vaccination through their primary school, it means you are in one of these areas.

How will the vaccine be given?

For most children, flu vaccination is given as a nasal spray up each nostril.

Who will give my child their flu vaccination?

That will depend on your child's age and whether they are still at home, at nursery or other pre-school child care, or at primary school, e.g. it could be the nurse at your GP surgery or a nurse or healthcare assistant at your child's school.

How does the new nasal vaccine work?

The nasal vaccine contains viruses that have been weakened to prevent them from causing flu but still allow your child to build up immunity, so that when your child comes into contact with the seasonal flu virus they are very unlikely to get ill.

Are there any side effects of the vaccine?

Some common side effects are headache, a runny or blocked nose, general tiredness and some loss of appetite. The vaccine is absorbed quickly so there's no need to worry it hasn't worked even if your child sneezes immediately after having had the spray.

