



Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives



Flu

**Protect children and young
people with a simple nasal spray**

Flu information for children
and young people in 2021/22



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Is flu serious?

Flu can be serious for children. Like COVID-19 it is caused by a virus and some children can develop serious complications. Most years children in Wales need treatment in Intensive Care Units because of flu.

All children aged two and three years old (age on 31 August 2021), and school children in reception class to school year 11, will be offered a nasal spray flu vaccine this year to help protect them from flu.

It is especially important that children and young people aged between six months and 17 years who have a long-term health condition get vaccinated, as they are at a higher risk of complications if they catch flu.

This winter we may see COVID-19 and flu both circulating at the same time, so it's very important for your child to get protected against flu.

Having a flu vaccine every year is one of the best ways to protect against flu.

Flu vaccines are given in a COVID-19 safe environment.

For the latest information, visit: phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine

Which children and young people can have a free flu vaccine?

All children from the age of two can have a free flu vaccine in 2021/22. This includes:

- ✓ All children in primary school
- ✓ All children in secondary school years 7 to 11
- ✓ All children who are aged two or three on 31 August 2021
- ✓ All children and young people up to the age of 17

Also children aged six months or over and who have any of the long term health conditions listed on page 3.

Why do children and some young people need a flu vaccine?

Flu is caused by viruses and spreads easily. Anyone can get flu but children have the highest rate of infection and flu can be serious for them.

Complications can include bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections.

Some children get so ill they need to go into hospital.

How does a flu vaccine help?

Having a flu vaccine will help protect your child from flu.

Protection starts around two weeks after having the vaccine. The vaccine usually offers children good protection against flu.

It also helps reduce the chance of children and young people spreading flu to others who are at high risk from flu, such as young babies, grandparents, and those with long-term health conditions.

Some people still get flu even after having a flu vaccine, but often with milder symptoms. Flu vaccines do not protect against colds, other respiratory viruses or other winter illnesses.

Do flu vaccines have any side effects?

After vaccination, some children and young people may get a temperature, feel tired, have a headache, have aching muscles or have a reduced appetite for a day or two. The nasal spray may cause a runny or blocked nose. The injection can leave a sore arm. Other reactions are less common.

- Flu vaccines are very safe.
- The flu vaccine will not cause flu.





What if my child has a health condition?

If your child is aged six months or older and has one of the following health conditions, it is important they have a flu vaccine every year as they are at increased risk of complications from flu.

Conditions include:

- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ A heart problem
- ✓ A chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including asthma that requires regular steroid inhalers or tablets
- ✓ Kidney disease (from stage 3)
- ✓ Lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (and also close contacts of people in this group)
- ✓ Liver disease
- ✓ Had a stroke or mini stroke
- ✓ A neurological condition
- ✓ A missing spleen or a problem with it
- ✓ A learning disability
- ✓ Young people aged 16+ with a higher body weight (Body Mass Index of 40 or above)

Children in these groups may get their vaccine at their school if they are in school years reception to year 11, or at their GP surgery.

Young carers

It is extra important for children and young people who care for someone who is vulnerable to flu and its complications either because of a long term health condition or their age, to have a flu vaccine every year. It helps protect them and also the person they care for.

Do I need to do anything?

Children who are aged two or three (age on 31 August 2021) are generally invited to have their flu vaccine at their GP surgery.

In some areas, three-year-olds and some four year olds are offered the vaccine in nursery.

This flu season, arrangements may be different due to COVID-19. For the latest information, visit:

phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine

If your child is in this age group and hasn't received an invitation for the vaccine by mid-November, contact their GP surgery. Children in school (reception class to school year 11) are sent information and a consent form by the school and will generally have their flu vaccine in school. Please read the information and return the signed form to school as soon as possible. Visit: **phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine** for any changes due to COVID-19.

If your child is aged four or older, and not in school, contact their GP surgery so they can get their vaccine.

If your child is aged under two, or aged 16 or 17 years of age, and is at increased risk of complications from flu due to a health condition, their GP surgery should invite them to have their vaccine.

Ideally, the flu vaccine should be given in the early autumn before flu starts to circulate in the community. However, it can still be given at a later date.

Flu vaccines will be given in a COVID-19 safe environment, to help keep your child safe.

What type of flu vaccine is given to children and young people?

Most children and young people will get a nasal spray vaccine as this is the best flu vaccine for them. It is a fine mist sprayed up the nose, and can be given from the age of two.

If your child misses their flu vaccine, speak to their school nurse, health visitor or GP surgery about getting the vaccine.

The nasal spray vaccine can't be given to anyone who is:

- ✗ under two years old;
- ✗ 18 years of age or older;
- ✗ pregnant;
- ✗ on long-term aspirin (salicylate) treatment;
- ✗ taking steroid tablets (currently, or in the last two weeks); or
- ✗ in close contact with someone who has a severely weakened immune system (for example, after a bone marrow transplant) and is being looked after in a protected environment.

The nasal spray vaccine can't be given to anyone who has:

- ✗ had a severe life-threatening allergic reaction to a flu vaccine (or any ingredient in the vaccine);
- ✗ a weakened immune system;
- ✗ a wheezy chest on the day of the vaccination or in the previous three days;
- ✗ increased the use of their asthma inhalers in the previous three days.

A flu vaccine injection is available for the majority of the small number of children and young people who can't have the nasal spray vaccine, from their GP surgery.

Children and young people with asthma who need regular oral steroids, or have needed intensive-care treatment for their asthma in the past, should be referred to a specialist for advice.

A cold or other minor illness is not a reason to delay a flu vaccination.

If your child is unwell with a high temperature it is best to delay their vaccination until they are feeling better. Remember to follow the latest advice if your child has any COVID-19 symptoms:

gov.wales/check-your-symptoms-see-if-you-need-coronavirus-medical-help

If your child cannot avoid contact with someone who has very severely weakened immunity, such as someone who has recently had a bone marrow transplant, you should discuss this with your doctor or nurse before your child has the nasal spray vaccine. They may decide to offer your child a flu vaccine injection instead.

Can my child have the vaccine if they are allergic to egg?

Most children and young people who are allergic to egg can receive the vaccine with no problems. The small number of individuals who have previously needed intensive-care treatment for anaphylaxis (a rare, life-threatening allergic reaction) to egg should be referred to a specialist.

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

Yes, flu vaccines can be given at the same time as most other vaccines.*

Does the nasal spray vaccine contain gelatine?

Yes, it contains traces of highly purified porcine gelatine which is also used in a range of essential medicines.

The nasal spray vaccine is the best flu vaccine for children and young people, but flu injections are gelatine-free so if you would prefer your child had this as an alternative contact their GP surgery so they don't miss out.

*For the latest advice on COVID-19 vaccines and co-administration please visit: **phw.nhs.wales/covidvaccine**

Where can I get more information?

Visit: phw.nhs.wales/flu vaccine

You can find out more about flu vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects, at:

medicines.org.uk/emc

Enter the name of the vaccine in the search box.

You can find out how to report suspected side effects online at: yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk or call the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm).

A schedule showing which immunisations are routinely offered in Wales is available from:

111.wales.nhs.uk/CompleteSchedule

If you have any questions or want more information, you can visit: 111.wales.nhs.uk, talk to your doctor or nurse or call **NHS 111 Wales**.

If 111 is not available in your area please call 0845 46 47. Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 2p per minute plus your telephone provider's usual charge.

To order more copies of this leaflet, visit:

publichealthwales.org/HealthInformationResources

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit:

111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights

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