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BEAT FLU

FLU

GET PROTECTED

Flu vaccination in 2020/21



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# IS FLU SERIOUS?

Flu can be **very serious**. It is caused by a virus and can lead to illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, which may need treatment in hospital.

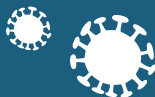
There are outbreaks of flu every winter, especially in hospitals and care homes.

**In a normal winter, thousands of people will die from flu-related illnesses in the UK.**

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

Having a flu vaccine every year is the best way to protect against flu.

**This year's flu vaccine will be given following the current guidance around social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE), to help keep you safe.** Arrangements may be different because of COVID-19. For the latest information, see [beatflu.org](https://www.beatflu.org)



**Did you know that the full name for flu is influenza?**

## WHO NEEDS PROTECTION AGAINST FLU?

Flu is more likely to be serious if you have a long-term health condition, are pregnant, or are 65 or older. If any of these apply to you, you are also more at risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19. Flu can also be serious for young children.

Every year in Wales, three-quarters of a million people have a flu vaccine. That's 1 in every 4 people.

**If any of the following apply to you, you are more likely to get complications from flu and are advised to have a flu vaccine**

- ✓ You are pregnant
- ✓ You are aged 65 or over
- ✓ You live in a residential or nursing home
- ✓ You have a heart problem
- ✓ You have a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including asthma that needs regular steroid inhalers or tablets
- ✓ You have kidney disease
- ✓ You have lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid or cancer treatment) or are in close contact with or live in the same house as someone with a lowered immunity
- ✓ You have liver disease
- ✓ You have diabetes
- ✓ You have had a stroke (or mini stroke)
- ✓ You have a neurological condition, for example multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy or post-polio syndrome
- ✓ You have a learning disability
- ✓ You have a problem with your spleen, for example sickle cell disease, or have had your spleen removed
- ✓ You are an adult with a higher body weight (Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more)

**If you are in one of those groups, you should have a flu vaccine even if you feel healthy.**



If you are pregnant, a flu vaccine will help protect you and your unborn baby. Flu can be very serious in pregnancy. If a pregnant woman gets flu, her baby is more likely to be born early, have a low birthweight, or be stillborn or die within their first week. The vaccine also helps protect the baby in the first four to six months of life, when flu can be very serious.



## CHILDREN

All children in primary school are offered a flu vaccine in school each year.

All children who are aged two or three on 31 August 2020 are offered a flu vaccine at their GP surgery. In some areas, three-year-olds will be offered the vaccine in nursery.

Children aged six months or over and who have any of the health conditions listed on page 2 should have a flu vaccine every year as they are at increased risk of becoming very ill with flu. The nasal spray flu vaccine is recommended for children aged two to 17. Eligible children aged six months to under two years will be offered a flu vaccine injection.

Our separate leaflet '[Flu vaccination for children in 2020/21](#)' has more information about the vaccination for children. (see [www.beatflu.org](http://www.beatflu.org))





## CARERS

If you are a carer for someone whose health would be at risk if you became ill with flu, you should have a free flu vaccine at your GP surgery or community pharmacy. This includes unpaid carers.

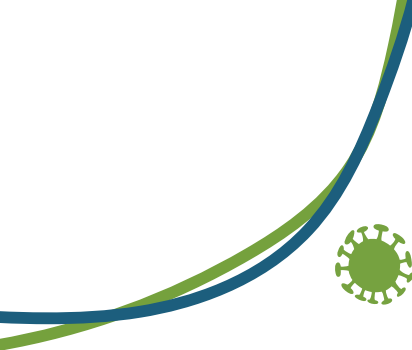
## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

If you are a health or social care worker and have direct contact with patients or clients, you should have a flu vaccination to protect you and the people you care for.

If you work in an adult care home or a children's hospice, or are a domiciliary carer, you should be vaccinated against flu. This is to protect you and the people you care for. NHS flu vaccines are available for you free from most community pharmacies – you just need to take proof of your employment when you go for your vaccination.

If you are a member of a voluntary organisation and provide planned first aid, or if you are a community first responder, you should also have a flu vaccination. You can get this from your GP surgery or most community pharmacies – you just need to take proof of your role.





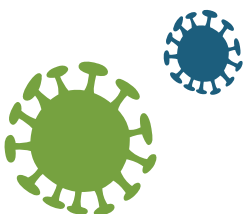
## WILL A FLU VACCINE PROTECT ME?

Flu vaccination is the single best way to protect against catching and spreading flu. It usually protects against flu in 3 to 6 people in every 10 who have it.

Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each year the vaccine is changed to match the flu viruses likely to be circulating.

Flu vaccines do not protect against other viruses such as colds or other winter illnesses.

There are different types of flu vaccine available. Some work better in different age groups. For the best protection, it is important to have a flu vaccine recommended for your age.



AGE	RECOMMENDED FLU VACCINES FOR BEST PROTECTION IN 2020/21
Children aged six months to under two in a risk group	Injection that protects against four strains of flu. It is grown in eggs (QIVe).
Eligible children aged two and over	Nasal spray vaccine that protects against four flu strains (LAIV).
Eligible adults under 65 years of age	Injection that protects against four strains of flu. This may be grown in cells (QIVc) or eggs (QIVe).
Anyone aged 65 or over	Injection that protects against three strains of flu and has been designed to work better in older people (aTIV), or one that protects against four strains of flu and is grown in cells (QIVc).



## WHEN SHOULD I GET A FLU VACCINE?

Flu vaccines usually become available towards the end of September. Ideally, you will have your flu vaccine before flu starts to circulate, which is usually mid-December. You can have it at a later date, but having it before flu circulates is best. It takes between 10 and 14 days for your body to respond fully after you have had a flu vaccine.

If you are in a group that is at increased risk of becoming very ill if they catch flu, you should have a flu vaccination every year.

**Flu vaccines are quick and very safe, and could prevent weeks of serious illness.**

## WILL I GET ANY SIDE EFFECTS FROM A FLU VACCINE?

After having a flu vaccine most people feel well. Some people get a slight temperature, feel tired, have a headache, or have aching muscles for a day or two. Your arm may be a bit red and sore. The flu vaccine will not give you flu.

Other side effects are very rare.







## IS THERE ANYONE WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE A FLU VACCINE?

There are very few people who cannot have a flu vaccine.

- ✗ People who have previously had a serious allergic reaction to a flu vaccine (or any part of it) should not have that vaccine again.
- ✗ Tell the nurse or doctor if you have a serious egg allergy. You can still have a flu vaccine but special arrangements might be needed.
- ✗ A cold or other minor illness is not a reason to delay a flu vaccination.
- ✗ If you are unwell with a high temperature, delay the vaccination until you feel better.

This flu season, arrangements may be different due to COVID-19. For the latest information, see [beatflu.org](https://www.beatflu.org)



If you are not sure if you are eligible for a free flu vaccine, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk) or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 (or 111 if available in your area).

If you are an adult in a risk group, are pregnant, or are aged 65 or over, you can get your flu vaccine at your GP surgery or at some community pharmacies. If you work in health or social care, ask your employer where to get your free vaccine.

Care home staff and domiciliary carers should talk to their community pharmacy about getting a flu vaccine.

If your child is in a group at increased risk of becoming very ill if they catch flu, or is aged between two and 10 on 31 August 2020, you should be contacted by their GP surgery or school nurse. If you think your child might have missed their vaccine, contact the school nurse if your child is at primary school. If they are not at primary school, contact their GP surgery.

## MORE ABOUT FLU...



### HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE FLU?

When people get flu they tend to become ill quite quickly. Symptoms can include fever, chills, a headache and aching muscles, often with a cough and sore throat.

In up to half of cases people can have flu without even realising it – and they can still spread it to others, sometimes with devastating effects.

Some COVID-19 symptoms are similar to flu so please check the latest advice and follow the current COVID-19 guidelines.

For the latest information visit [beatflu.org](http://beatflu.org)

# WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE FLU?

If you have a temperature or a cough, follow advice for what to do for COVID-19 symptoms.

Flu is usually managed by resting at home, keeping warm and drinking plenty of water. You can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower a high temperature and relieve aches if necessary.

To help stop flu and other viruses spreading, remember to:



## CATCH IT

use a tissue when you sneeze or cough



## BIN IT

put the tissue in the bin as soon as possible



## KILL IT

by washing your hands or use hand sanitizer.



Most people with flu do not need to visit their GP surgery. But if you are aged 65 or over, pregnant or in a risk group and think you have flu, you should talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist as soon as possible. There are medicines called antivirals that can be given and these may help if taken within two days of the start of the illness. If you haven't had your vaccine this flu season, you should have it as soon as you are feeling better. This will help protect you against other strains of flu.



# WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Visit [beatflu.org](https://beatflu.org)

You can find out more about flu vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects, at [www.medicines.org.uk/emc](https://www.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/](https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/) or call the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm).

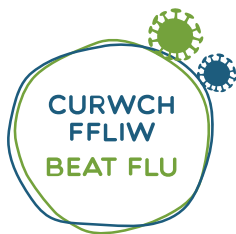
A schedule showing which immunisations are routinely offered in Wales is available from [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/Leaflets](https://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/Leaflets)

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](https://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk) or call **NHS Direct Wales** on **0845 46 47** (or 111 if available in your area).

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights](https://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights)

To order more copies of this leaflet, visit [www.publichealthwales.org/HealthInformationResources](https://www.publichealthwales.org/HealthInformationResources)

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