



**CURWCH  
FFLIW  
BEAT FLU**

# FLU

## GET PROTECTED!

Over three-quarters of a million people  
in Wales had a flu vaccine last year



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# IS FLU SERIOUS?

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

Every winter there are outbreaks of flu, especially in hospitals and care homes.

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

**A yearly flu vaccine is the best way to protect against flu.**

## 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**. Every year in Wales three-quarters of a million people have a flu vaccine.

If any of the following apply to you, you are more likely to get complications from flu. **So even if you feel healthy, you should 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)
- ✓ You have liver disease
- ✓ You have had a stroke (or mini stroke)
- ✓ You have diabetes
- ✓ You have a neurological condition, for example multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy or post-polio syndrome
- ✓ You have a problem with your spleen, for example sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- ✓ You have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or more

If you are pregnant, a flu vaccine will help protect you and your unborn baby. **Flu can be very serious in pregnancy.**



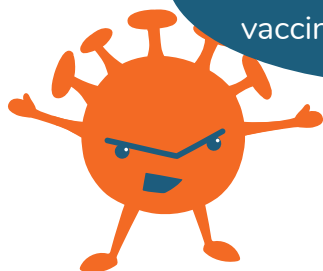
If a pregnant woman gets flu, her baby is more likely to be born early, with a low birthweight, or be stillborn or die within their first week. The vaccine also helps protect the baby in the first four to six months of life, when flu can be very serious.

## 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 2019 are offered a flu vaccine at their GP surgery.

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. The nasal spray flu vaccine is recommended for children aged two to 17. Children who are under two and are in one of the eligible groups are at increased risk of becoming very ill with flu will be offered a flu vaccine injection.



Our separate leaflet about children's flu has more information about the vaccination for children.

## 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 anyone who is working as an unpaid carer.



## 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. Ask your employer about this.

If you work in an adult care home or in a children's hospice, you can now have a **free** NHS flu vaccination. This is to protect you and the people you care for. It is available 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 employment.

# WILL A FLU VACCINE PROTECT ME?



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

Flu vaccine is **the single best way to protect against catching and spreading flu.**

It usually prevents flu in **4 to 6 people in every 10** who have it. Flu vaccines do not protect against colds and other flu-like 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                                     | FLU VACCINE  |
|---|--|
| Children aged two and over              | Nasal spray flu vaccine (LAIV)   |
| Children aged under two in a risk group | Injection that protects against four flu strains (QIVe)  |
| Eligible adults up to age 64            | Injection that protects against four flu strains. This may be grown in eggs (known as QIVe) or in cells (known as QIVc).   |
| Anyone aged 65 and over                 | Injection that protects against four flu strains and is grown in cells (known as QIVc), or one that protects against three strains that has been designed to work better in older people (known as aTIV) or a high-dose flu vaccine (known as TIV-HD). |



## WHEN SHOULD I GET A FLU VACCINE?

Ideally, you will have your flu vaccine before flu starts to circulate, which is usually mid-December at the earliest. You can have it later in the year, but having it before flu circulates is best.

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 safe, and could prevent weeks of serious illness.



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

After having a flu vaccine, 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. **Flu vaccines are very safe.**

## 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 are sometimes needed.
- ✗ If you are unwell with a high temperature, it is wise to delay the vaccination until you feel better.

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

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NEXT?

If you are not sure if you are eligible for a flu vaccine, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit [nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](https://nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk), or call **NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47** (or 111 if available in your area). The vaccines are generally available from September each year.

**If you are an adult in a risk group, are pregnant, or if you are aged 65 or over**, you can get your flu vaccine at your GP surgery or at some community pharmacies. So talk to them about getting your vaccine.

If you **work in health or social care** ask your employer about getting your vaccine.

**Care home staff** should talk to their community pharmacist about getting a flu vaccine.

If your **child** is in a group at increased risk of becoming very ill if they catch flu, or **aged between two and 10** on 31 August 2019, you should be contacted by their GP surgery or school nursing service. If you think your child might have missed the vaccine, contact the school nursing service if your child is at primary school, or 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.

Other people have flu without even realising it – and they can still spread it to others, sometimes with devastating effects.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET FLU?

If you think you might have flu it is important to rest at home, keep warm and drink plenty of water. You can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower a high temperature and relieve aches if necessary.

To help stop flu 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 **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 [www.beatflu.org](http://www.beatflu.org)

You can find out more about flu vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects, at [medicines.org.uk/emc](http://medicines.org.uk/emc) by entering the name of the vaccine or influenza vaccine in the search box.

You can find out how to report suspected side effects online at [yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/](http://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 [nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/Leaflets](http://nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/Leaflets)

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit [nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://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 [nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights](http://nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights)

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



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