

# Flu Vaccine for Children 2020/21

Fact checking

Communication material



The childhood flu vaccine is the best way to protect you and your family from flu. Be a flu champion and get your children vaccinated today.

For more information visit the NHS information page on the flu vaccine

<https://tinyurl.com/y3ana57v>

## Pre school children

- Flu vaccine is offered for free to all children aged 2 to 11
- If the child was age 2 or 3 on 31<sup>st</sup> August, or has had their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September then they will have the vaccine at the GP.
- It is also offered to vulnerable children aged 6 months to two years who are in a high risk group by their GP
- The flu vaccine doesn't work well in babies under 6 months – this is one of the reasons we vaccinate pregnant women to help protect young children
- Children under 2 are given the injectable vaccine
- Those aged 2-4 will be offered the nasal spray
- For children with severe egg allergy, severe asthma or those that are immunocompromised they can have an alternative vaccine, which is injectable.
- For parents who prefer for their child to have the injectable vaccine due to porcine content, they can request this also – just let your GP know before your appointment.
- For more information visit the NHS information webpage  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

## School aged children

- The flu vaccine is offered to all school aged children from reception up to year 7. (All primary school children and first year of secondary school).
- If children were 4 or over on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 (i.e. they are of reception age), they can only have the vaccination in school from the school provider (or at a catch up clinic). They cannot have it at their GP.
- Most children in this age group are offered a live vaccine via a nasal spray (no needles)
- This is the most effective vaccine in this age group
- They will be offered the vaccine at their school, or in a catch up clinic
- For children with severe egg allergy, severe asthma or those that are immunocompromised they can have an alternative vaccine, which is injectable. This will be given in one of the catch up clinics.
- For parents who prefer for their child to have the injectable vaccine due to porcine content of the nasal spray, they will be offered it in a catch-up clinic at the end of November.
- The catch up clinic schedule and location are provided at the end of the presentation. Please note that due to social distancing measures, these slots are by appointment only. To make an appointment contact CNWL (Central North West London NHS Trust).
- Please contact CNWL (details at end of slide) for more information

The table below summarises the different vaccines given to different age groups

Age Group	Recommended Vaccine	Live vaccine?	Types of flu strains protected	Reason for recommendation
<b>Children aged 6 months to 2 years</b>	Egg-grown quadrivalent vaccine (QIVe)	<b>No</b>	<b>Four</b>	LAIV is not suitable for children under two
<b>Children aged 2 – 17 years</b>	Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Four</b>	Nasal vaccine helps to reduce spread of flu virus in children
<b>Adults aged 18 – 64 years</b>	Quadrivalent influenza vaccine: Egg-grown (QIVe) Cell-based (QIVc)	<b>No</b>	<b>Four</b>	Quadrivalent vaccines protect against four types of flu strain
<b>Adults aged 65 or over</b>	Adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (aTIV)	<b>No</b>	<b>Three</b>	“Adjuvant” is added to the vaccine to make it more effective in older people

## Is flu dangerous?

- As many as 650 000 people a year can die of the flu. This only represents respiratory deaths, so the likely impact is even higher. Even healthy people can get the flu, but especially people whose immune systems are vulnerable. Most people will recover within a few weeks, but some can develop complications including sinus and ear infections, pneumonia, heart or brain inflammations.
- In the UK, **around 11,000 deaths each** year are attributed to flu. This is 90 deaths a day between December and March.
- For more information visit the Oxford Vaccine Groups website about the flu vaccine <http://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/vk/inactivated-flu-vaccine>



Is the flu dangerous? Flu is a respiratory virus that in the UK causes around 11,000 deaths/yr. That's 90 deaths a day between December and March. Get your flu vaccine today

# We're part of a young healthy family – why do we need the flu vaccine?

- **Children are 'super spreaders' of flu.** This means that although they may not get very unwell themselves, they can pass it on to other people who are more at risk of complications.
- Even if you are part of a young healthy family, vaccinating children is part of the wider approach to stop flu spreading in the community, and every child that is vaccinated contributes to keeping hospitalisation from flu down.
- In previous years the flu vaccine has been very effective amongst children, meaning they are vital to the fight against flu



Do children need the flu vaccine?

Children are super spreaders for flu – meaning they spread it to more vulnerable members of the community.

Also the flu vaccine is often most effective in children.

This means children are vital in the fight against flu.

## How well does the vaccine work? Will I still get flu?

- How effective the flu vaccine is changes each year. The flu vaccine is on average around 40-50% effective, and tends to be more effective in children.
- In 2016/17 the flu vaccine prevented two thirds (67%) of flu cases in children under 18.
- You absolutely can't get flu from having the vaccination. However, it takes 10-14 days to be protected from flu once you've had the vaccination, so you could catch the flu before you're protected.
- Also, the vaccine doesn't work 100% of the time because it is designed to combat the particular strains of flu the experts predict will be circulating during that particular flu season. When the match is less good you will be less well protected. However, the vaccine is generally very effective at reducing hospital admissions, even when not a perfect match.
- You might coincidentally catch another respiratory disease (such as a cold) which the vaccine doesn't protect you against.



Although the flu vaccine is not 100% effective  
It can prevent up to 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of cases in children  
Get your child the flu vaccine today

## What are the side effects?

- Neither of the flu vaccines will give your child flu.
- The flu vaccine has been administered regularly in the UK since 2000 and is given safely to around 17 million people each year
- You can have the flu vaccine and also take natural remedies to boost your immune system. They will not interfere with the effectiveness of the vaccine.
- The flu vaccine is proven to be safe. Severe side effects are extremely rare. If you feel achy or slightly feverish, it is a normal reaction of the immune system to the vaccine, and generally lasts only a day or two. It is not flu.
- Side effects of the injectable vaccine include soreness around the injection site and muscle ache. A small minority of children may also experience slightly raised temperature (fever), headache, sweating, aching joints or muscles, shivering tiredness, feeling generally unwell
- Possible side effects of the nasal vaccine which a small minority of children may experience include having a runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, muscles aches, mild fever and in older children a sore throat.



The flu vaccine has been administered regularly in the UK since 2000 and is given safely to around 17 million people each year. It does not give you flu.



## What is in the vaccine?

- The main ingredient in the nasal spray is weakened flu virus. This stimulates your immune system to produce antibodies, which means that your body recognises the flu virus much more quickly should you become infected, and is better able to fight it off. This is the only ingredient that changes each year, as different strains of virus are used depending on the types of flu that are expected to be circulating that year.
- The injectable vaccine contains inactivated flu virus.
- Apart from this, the main ingredient in the vaccine is water (0.5mls or a few drops)
- All other ingredients are only present in very tiny amounts and there is no evidence that they cause harm in these amounts. Vaccine ingredients can look unfamiliar. However, it is important to remember that many of the substances used in vaccines are found naturally in the body
- The flu vaccine does not contain mercury.

## Porcine content

- The nasal spray flu vaccine contains a small amount of a processed porcine substance.
- Very sensitive scientific tests have shown that no DNA from pigs can be detected in the nasal vaccine. These tests show that the gelatine is broken down so much that the original source cannot be identified.
- Most Imams and Rabbis generally support vaccinations irrespective of the ingredients, because preservation of life is seen as more important.
- For those that choose to not have the nasal spray, an injectable vaccine with no porcine content will be available from the end of November through CNWL (see end of slide deck for details of clinics).



For those that don't wish for their child to get the nasal flu vaccine due to the porcine content there is a non-porcine alternative available

## Does the flu vaccine work for everyone?

- The flu vaccine works less well in some groups, for example the elderly, which is why different age groups are given different vaccines.
- Most children are offered the vaccine which works the best for them – the nasal spray.
- There is no evidence that it works less well for those from black, Asian or other ethnic minorities.
- The flu vaccine is not a trial COVID-19 vaccine for testing on black, Asian and ethnic minorities. It is a safe vaccine against the influenza virus which is given to millions of people of all ethnicities every year.
- Vaccination schedules are different in all countries as they are designed to prevent the local populations from the diseases which pose most of a problem there. This is why you may not have been offered the flu vaccine previously if you were living abroad.



The flu vaccine is a safe vaccine against the influenza virus which is given to millions of people of all ethnicities every year.

## The nasal spray is a 'live' vaccine – what does that mean?

- Children are given a 'live attenuated vaccine', through a nasal spray.
- Although it is called a 'live' vaccine, it does not give children the flu as the virus has been weakened.
- As it is a live vaccine, precautions are taken in order to not give the vaccine to children that are immunosuppressed. These children can receive a different vaccine from their GP.
- Although the weakened virus in the nasal vaccine can cause viral shredding – the virus is weakened, in very low levels, and doesn't survive outside the body for long, and is not able to spread between people in the same way the natural flu virus does.
- Unvaccinated contacts are not at risk of becoming seriously ill with the weakened flu vaccine virus, either through being in the same room where flu vaccine has been given, or by being in contact with a recently vaccinated individual
- Children are told to avoid seeing any severely immunocompromised friends and family in the days afterwards.
- Millions of doses of LAIV have now been given in the UK and it has an excellent safety profile. Over 121 million doses of LAIV have been distributed worldwide.

# Having the flu vaccine does not weaken the immune system?

- Having the vaccine allows the immune system to learn to fight it in a controlled manner before they are exposed to it in the community
- Children's immune systems are exposed to thousands of pathogens and they produce millions of antibodies. By introducing one more, through the flu nasal spray, does not effect the ability of the immune system to fight off other diseases
- Having the flu vaccination every year does not weaken your immune system. That would be like saying, 'if I run on this treadmill I will get weaker'. Your immune system is designed to cope with new viruses all the time.
- Even if you have already had flu, it is a good idea to get the flu vaccine. The flu virus mutates and there's more than one type. You can also catch more than one strain of flu in the same season.
- The flu vaccine protects against four common strains of flu.



Having the flu vaccine will not weaken your child's immune system. Children are exposed to thousands of pathogens producing millions of antibodies. Introducing one more will not effect the ability of the immune system to fight off other diseases

## Flu & Covid-19

- People infected with both flu and Covid-19 are more than twice as likely to die as someone with Covid-19 alone
- There is some crossover of common symptoms (cough and fever) and so getting the vaccine means less chance of having to self isolate with symptoms that are not due to Covid-19.
- Those that are vulnerable to Covid-19, are also those more vulnerable to flu.
- Having the flu vaccine will not make you more likely to get Covid-19, in fact if someone gets flu this year they are at increased risk of COVID-19 owing to their weakened immune defences.
- The flu vaccination will not interact with any potential Covid-19 vaccine. The two viruses are different, and the vaccines will work in different ways. Our bodies are able to deal with multiple vaccines at the same time, as happens with routine childhood immunisations, or as an adult when you are going travelling.



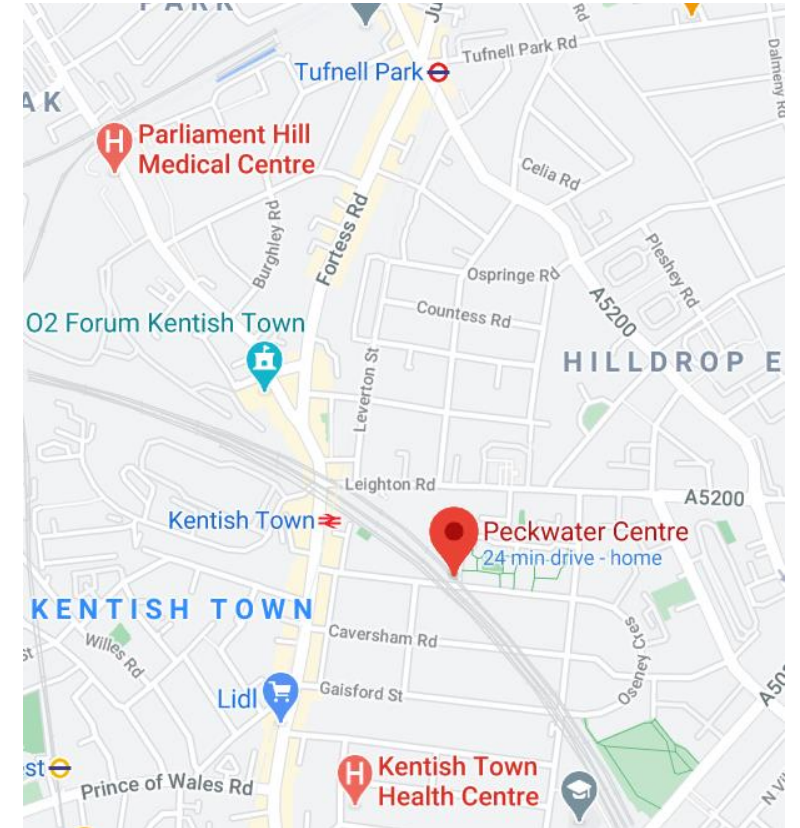
Having the flu vaccine will not make you more likely to get Covid-19, in fact if someone gets flu this year they are at increased risk from COVID-19. Protect yourself today.

# Catch up clinic dates in Camden

- They have now visited almost every school once
- They will continue to go back into schools

## Catch-up clinics

- CNWL run **daily community catch up clinics**
- **Ground Floor, Peck water Centre**
- These are **by appointment only**
- For those that have missed vaccinations at school
  - Due to isolation
  - Any other reason
- These are for those that require the IM vaccination
  - For cultural or religious reasons (non-porcine alternative)  
**This will be available from the end of November**
  - For health reasons



Contact: CNWL

Telephone: 020 3317 5076 (Immunisation office) or 020 3317 5074 (Immunisation Nurse)

Email: [patriciastephens@nhs.net](mailto:patriciastephens@nhs.net)

Thank you for reading. Contact details for more information.

For further details on the flu vaccine and vaccinations in general please see:  
NHS information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>  
Oxford Vaccine Group <http://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/vk/inactivated-flu-vaccine>

For queries about your child's vaccination contact:  
For school age – Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (Camden)  
Telephone: 020 3317 5076 (Immunisation office) or 020 3317 5074 (Immunisation Nurse)  
[Email: patriciastephens@nhs.net](mailto:patriciastephens@nhs.net)

For under 5's – contact your local GP

If you have any further questions about the information in these slides please get in touch  
Public Health email [ciphadmin@islington.gov.uk](mailto:ciphadmin@islington.gov.uk)