

DON'T PUT OFF GETTING THE FLU VACCINATION – IT'S FREE BECAUSE YOU NEED IT

Cold weather doesn't have to go hand in hand with illness. Getting the flu jab is one way to help you and your loved ones stay well this winter.

Flu vaccination is part of the Stay Well This Winter campaign, a joint initiative from NHS England and Public Health England, to help the public ward off common winter illnesses.

Flu is a highly infectious disease and can lead to serious complications if you have a long-term health condition like: COPD; bronchitis, emphysema; diabetes; heart, kidney or liver disease or have suffered a stroke. Flu on top of health conditions like these can easily develop into something very serious and could land you in hospital. People with these and other long-term health conditions are eligible for a free flu jab through their GP or pharmacist.

The flu campaign also targets pregnant women and parents of children aged 2, 3 and 4 and in school years 1, 2 and 3. For eligible children, the flu vaccine is not an injection, just a quick nasal spray available.

Flu can be horrible for little children, and if they get it, they can spread it around the whole family.

Children who get the flu have the same symptoms as adults – including fever, chills, aching muscles, headache, stuffy nose, dry cough and sore throat. Some children develop a very high fever or complications of flu, such as bronchitis or pneumonia and may need hospital treatment.

The flu vaccine can help protect your child from flu and also reduce the chance of flu spreading to others.

If you have a child aged 2, 3 or 4, get their free nasal spray flu vaccine from their GP. Children in school years 1, 2 or 3 will get their vaccinations through their school in most parts of the country.

Pregnancy naturally weakens the body's immune system and as flu can cause serious complications for you and your baby. Pregnant women who get the flu may be less able to fight off infections, increasing the risk of becoming ill. The flu jab is the safest way to protect you and your baby against flu and you can have it at any stage of pregnancy, however fit and healthy you might feel.

If you are eligible for the flu vaccine get it now – it's free because you need it.

Contact your GP, pharmacist or midwife to get the flu jab.

Visit www.nhs.uk/staywell for more information.