

# DO YOU KNOW YOUR FLU FACTS?



help us  
help you

I don't think I will be getting the flu vaccine as it can give you the flu, cause side effects or make me more unwell than just suffering from flu symptoms.

It's impossible to get flu from the vaccine because it doesn't contain live viruses.

While it is true that a very small number of people may experience some very mild flu-like symptoms afterwards, or even an aching arm, this is just the body recognising the vaccine and preparing the immune system which shouldn't last longer than 24 hours.

I believe that having the flu vaccine will make me more vulnerable to getting Covid-19 as the vaccine contains coronavirus.

This is simply not true. The NHS wants to keep you safe and well. The flu vaccine is the best protection we have for those who are most vulnerable to both Covid-19 and the flu, both of which can cause severe illness or even death amongst those most at risk.

This year the NHS is also offering a free vaccine for people who live with someone who is at high risk of coronavirus.

FOR THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE FOR CHILDREN CONTACT YOUR GP.  
FOR THE ADULT VACCINE CONTACT YOUR PHARMACY OR GP.

**Will the flu vaccine also protect me against Covid-19? I have heard that you can't suffer from both at the same time.**

The flu vaccine won't protect you against Covid-19. But it will help protect you against flu, which is an unpleasant and potentially serious virus that can sometimes cause complications leading to hospital treatment for those most at risk.

There is also a possibility of being co-infected with both Covid-19 and flu. Helping to protect against flu is particularly important with Covid-19 around because people vulnerable to Covid-19 are also at risk of complications from flu.

**I had the flu vaccine last year so I don't need to have it again this year.**

A flu vaccination is not a life-long protection against flu.

Just because you got the vaccine last winter, does not mean you can skip it this year. Flu is a virus that is constantly changing, and a new jab is developed every year to try and counter the latest strains. Even if you have already had flu this year, you should still get the jab.

**I have been told that I shouldn't have the flu vaccine if I'm pregnant or breast feeding – is this true?**

It's natural to be careful when you're pregnant, but it's really important to get the flu jab as it helps protect you and your baby from catching flu.

If you get flu while pregnant, you are actually more at risk of complications, so we'd highly recommend talking to your GP about getting the flu jab and any other concerns you might have.

The vaccine poses no risk to breastfeeding mums or their babies.

**The flu vaccine goes against my religious and ethical beliefs, as it contains gelatine – so I can't have it even if I wanted to.**

While the nasal vaccine contains a highly processed form of gelatine (porcine gelatine), the injectable vaccine offered to adults does not.

It is an inactivated vaccine that does not contain any live viruses and cannot give you flu. There are different types available depending on how they were made, ask your GP for more information.

**FOR THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE FOR CHILDREN CONTACT YOUR GP.  
FOR THE ADULT VACCINE CONTACT YOUR PHARMACY OR GP.**

**Me and my family have very strong immune systems and live extremely healthy lifestyles so we are very unlikely to get the flu.**

While you might be lucky enough to be fighting fit, you and your child could potentially spread it to other people who may be more susceptible, like the very young or old, pregnant women or people with an underlying health condition.

While flu can cause mild illness in most people, some are more likely to develop potentially serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia, with around 11,000 people a year dying as a result in England.

The vaccine helps prevent these complications and therefore the need to go into hospital, particularly for those who are vulnerable.

**I don't think many people actually get the flu so getting the flu vaccine is unnecessary.**

Although flu might not seem like a deadly illness, on average it kills around 11,000 people in England a year.

While you might be healthy or only have a mild case, you could potentially spread it to other people who may be more susceptible, like the very young or old, pregnant women or people with underlying health conditions. The flu can even spread amongst those showing no symptoms at all.

Speak to your GP or practice nurse, or alternatively your local pharmacist, to book a vaccination appointment.

**People that say they are suffering from the flu only have a really bad cold.**

Whilst some of the symptoms of flu and the common cold are similar, flu is much worse than a bad cold. Symptoms tend to come on quickly and very severely, leaving you with aching muscles, a headache, exhaustion, and fever.

If you are not sure if it's a cold or flu, it's probably not flu!

**I want to get the flu vaccine but I'm worried that it will be a scary experience for myself and my child (staff in PPE/fear of needles).**

For children, the vaccine is actually given as a single spray squirted up each nostril.

It is needle-free, plus the spray is quick, painless and is absorbed very quickly. It will still work even if, after the vaccination, your child develops a runny nose, sneezes, or blows their nose.

However, if your child has a respiratory condition, or is in close contact with someone undergoing cancer treatments or whose immune system is compromised, it is possible that you and your child may be offered the vaccine via an injection.

If you have concerns about what to expect, talk to your GP practice, they will be able to talk you through the process, so you and your child know what to expect.

**FOR THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE FOR CHILDREN CONTACT YOUR GP.  
FOR THE ADULT VACCINE CONTACT YOUR PHARMACY OR GP.**

**I feel as though I will be more at risk of picking up a virus just going to get the flu vaccination – it's not safe.**

The NHS is working hard to make it safe and convenient to get the flu jab, for people in south west London this winter.

Providers of flu vaccination will have measures in place to keep you safe. Staff giving the vaccine will be wearing protective equipment to protect both you and them from the virus.

Appointment times may also be scheduled to reduce numbers in the waiting area, or you may be asked not to arrive early.

**I didn't get round to having the flu vaccination last year and I feel this year it will be made even more difficult as I can only get an appointment with my doctor on the phone or by video.**

The NHS is working hard to make getting a flu jab safe and convenient for people in south west London this winter.

It's not just your GP who can give you the vaccine. Many pharmacists also offer the adult flu vaccines.

Speak to your GP or practice nurse, or alternatively your local pharmacist, to book a vaccination appointment.

**I am not eligible for the flu vaccination and I'm sure it's too expensive for me to have it.**

There are many groups of people, including carers who are offered a free flu vaccination within their GP practice or community pharmacy. If you are not eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination, you can still protect yourself with a private flu vaccine for around £15.

The flu vaccine is available from pharmacies in the high street and many supermarkets. However, pharmacists will be prioritising patients who are at risk before offering private immunisations.

Speak to your local pharmacist to find out more.

**I wanted to have the flu jab last year, however my surgery had run out of the vaccination. I wouldn't want to have a vaccination if there could be a shortage and someone else really needs it.**

The government has announced plans for later in the year that the flu vaccine may be given to 50-64 year olds. More information will be available later in the autumn.

However, if you are aged 50-64 in an at-risk group, you should not delay having your flu vaccine.

**FOR THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE FOR CHILDREN CONTACT YOUR GP.  
FOR THE ADULT VACCINE CONTACT YOUR PHARMACY OR GP.**