

Protect yourself this winter

Get your free flu vaccine now



It's quick, safe and protects your loved ones too

Information for health and social care workers



Public Health
Agency

Health and social care workers like you are more likely to come into contact with the flu virus.

Around

1 in 4 health and social care workers could catch flu during a mild flu season. This means you are at much greater risk than the general public.



You can also pass flu to your patients, colleagues and family members before you realise you are ill.

Every year, thousands of HSC staff get vaccinated against flu. Getting vaccinated is quick, safe and helps protect you and those around you and helps keep health and social care services running safely over winter.

Get your free flu vaccine now.

Every vaccination helps protect:

- You
- Your family
- Your team and co-workers
- The patients and clients who rely on your care



How bad can flu be?

Symptoms of flu include fever, chills, headache, aching muscles, extreme fatigue, cough and sore throat – and because flu is a virus, antibiotics won't help.

Flu can be a nasty experience, even for people who are usually fit and healthy.

But it can lead to more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia or make existing conditions worse. In the worst cases, flu can result in a stay in hospital or even death. You may recover from flu, but some of your patients may not.

How effective is the vaccine?

The flu vaccine is the best available protection against the 3 most common strains of flu. Even if you do catch flu after vaccination, you are likely to have a milder illness and be less likely to develop serious complications.

How safe is the vaccine?

The flu vaccine is safe and has been used for many years. Millions of people receive their flu vaccine each year, and all vaccines used here undergo rigorous safety testing and are monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.



Which health and social care workers should have the flu vaccine?

All health and social care workers should have the flu vaccine. This includes medical staff, nursing staff, staff in allied health professions, mental health staff, ambulance staff, social care staff and any support staff.

I had the flu vaccine last year, do I need to get it again this year?

Yes. Flu viruses can change from year to year. A new flu vaccine is made each year to help protect you. That is why it is important to get vaccinated every year.

When should I have the flu vaccine?

It is important that you get your flu vaccination in October or early November to be ready to fight off infection. The earlier you get the vaccine, the sooner you will develop protection.

Should I expect a reaction to the vaccination?

After vaccination, your arm may be sore for a day or two where you had the injection. Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days. Other reactions are very rare.

Can the vaccine cause flu?

No. The flu vaccine cannot cause flu because it does not contain live flu virus.

Is there anybody who should not be vaccinated?

Most people with a serious allergy to hens' eggs can be given a flu vaccine but you need to discuss this or any other serious allergies you may have with the occupational health nurse or doctor.

The flu vaccine should not be given to those who have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous flu vaccine.



Is the vaccine safe for pregnant women?

Yes. If you are pregnant, you should get the vaccine no matter what stage of pregnancy. You will be offered the vaccine by your GP or midwife.

There is a lot of evidence that flu vaccines are safe in pregnancy and for your newborn baby. Millions of pregnant women have received seasonal flu vaccine, and the vaccine's safety has been carefully monitored. This has shown the vaccine to be safe for pregnant women and their babies. Flu infection during pregnancy, however, can be very harmful to both mother and baby.



Where do I get the vaccine?

You can get the vaccine:

- from your local HSC Trust (clinics will be advertised)
- at a participating community pharmacy

<https://vaccinations.hscni.net/location-search>

If you work in a care home, you can get your vaccine either when the community pharmacist is there to vaccinate residents or at any time from a participating pharmacy. No matter where you are working, if you are already in an 'at-risk' group because of your own health, your GP will offer you the flu vaccine.

If you get your vaccination outside of a Trust clinic, please inform your vaccinator that you are a health and social care worker so that they can record it accurately.

What if I'm too busy?

Vaccination only takes a few minutes and could help prevent days off work and your usual activities.

Protect yourself this winter – get your free flu vaccine now

"Getting the flu vaccine will make me feel safer this winter – and it only took 5 minutes out of my day" Rosie, NIAS



For more information on flu, follow the links or scan the QR codes below



www.publichealth.hscni.net



www.pha.site/flu



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Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).

www.publichealth.hscni.net

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