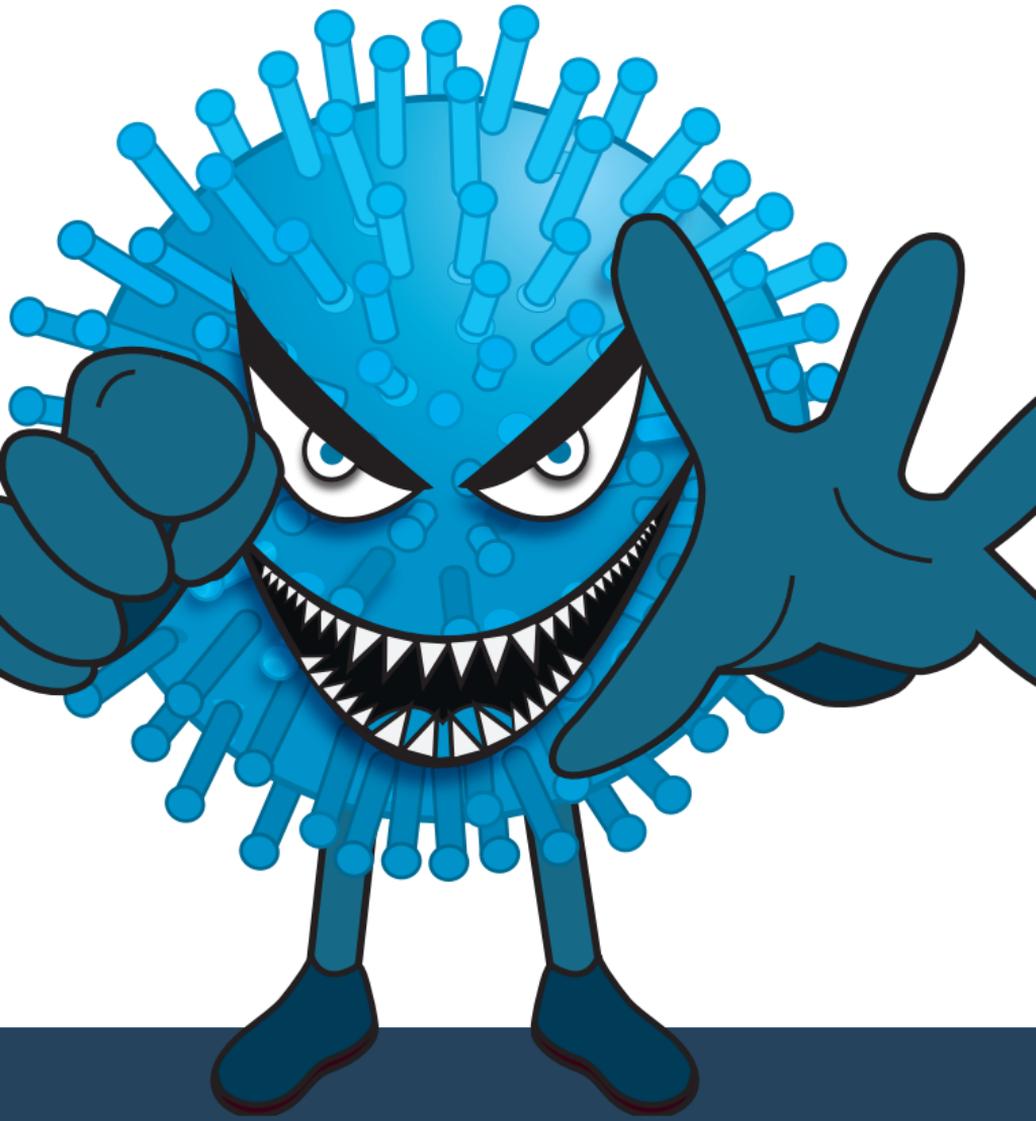




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Protect yourself against **FLU**

Every year in Wales $\frac{3}{4}$ million
people are vaccinated against flu

Should you be one of them in 2018-19?

Why do I need to be vaccinated against flu?

Flu can be serious. It can lead to serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia which may need hospital treatment. In a normal winter thousands of people will die from flu related illnesses in the UK.

Flu is more serious if you have a long-term health condition, are pregnant, or are aged 65 or older.

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

How will a flu vaccine protect me?

Flu vaccine usually prevents flu in 4 to 6 people in every 10 who have it.

Flu viruses are constantly changing, and the vaccine is changed each year to match the flu viruses likely to be circulating.

There are different types of flu vaccine available, and some work better in different age groups. It is important to have the best flu vaccine for your age.

Children from 2 years of age should have the nasal spray flu vaccine which helps protect against four flu strains. It is the best flu vaccine for children.

Adults up to 64 years of age should have a flu vaccine injection that protects against four flu strains.

Anyone aged 65 and over should have a different injectable flu vaccine, designed to work better in older people. It is known as **aTIV** and is the best flu vaccine for this age group.

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

Am I at risk from flu?

If any of the following apply to you, you are at increased risk of complications from flu even if you feel healthy:

- A heart problem
- A chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including asthma that requires regular steroid inhalers or tablets
- Kidney disease
- Lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid or cancer treatment)
- Liver disease
- Had a stroke (or mini stroke)
- Diabetes
- A neurological condition, for example multiple sclerosis (MS) cerebral palsy or post-polio syndrome
- A problem with your spleen, for example sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- A Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more
- Aged 65 years or over
- Living in residential or nursing home

Pregnant women

If you are pregnant, you and your baby are at increased risk of flu and you should have a flu vaccine. It will help protect you and your unborn child.

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 birth weight, or be stillborn or die within their first week. The vaccine also helps protect the baby in the first 4-6 months of life when flu can be very serious.

Children

Children from six months of age with any of the health conditions listed above should have a flu vaccine every year. The nasal spray flu vaccine is recommended for children aged 2-17 years of age, others will be offered a flu vaccine injection.

Annual flu vaccine is offered routinely in school to all children in primary school, and all children aged 2 or 3 years old on 31 August 2018 at their GP surgery.

The separate children's flu leaflet has more information about flu vaccines 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 from your GP surgery or community pharmacy.

Health and social care workers

If you are a health or social care worker with face-to-face contact with patients or clients, you should have a flu vaccination. This is to protect you and also the people you care for.

If you work in an adult care home you can now have a free NHS flu vaccination. This is available from most community pharmacies with evidence of employment.

If you are an unpaid carer the vaccine is available from your GP practice or some community pharmacies.

You should also have a flu vaccination if you are a member of a voluntary organisation providing care, planned first aid or a community first responder.

When can I get a vaccine?

The best time to have a flu vaccine is before flu starts to circulate which is usually mid-December at the earliest.

In 2018, the recommended flu vaccines for children and those aged 65 and over will be delivered in stages between September and November. GP practices will offer vaccination as soon as possible, but delivery will be staggered so some people may be asked to wait until the recommended vaccine for them is available. Please be patient during this period.

If you are at increased risk from flu you should have a flu vaccination every year.

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, headaches and aching muscles, often with a cough and sore throat.

What should I do if I get flu?

Rest at home in bed if needed, 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:

- **Catch it** – use a tissue when you sneeze or cough
- **Bin it** – put the tissue into the bin as soon as possible
- **Kill it** by washing your hands or use hand sanitizer

If you are elderly 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 your vaccine as soon as you are feeling better. This will help protect you against other types of flu.

I had the flu vaccine last year. Do I need one this year?

Yes, you need one **every** year.

Is there anyone who should not have a flu vaccine?

Very few people 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 flu 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 delay vaccination until feeling better.

A cough, cold or other minor illness are not reasons to delay a flu vaccination.

Will I get any side effects from a flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are very safe. After having the vaccine, some people get a slight temperature, feel tired, have a headache, or have aching muscles for a day or two, and your arm may be a bit red and sore.

Other side effects are very rare.

Flu vaccines are quick and safe, and could prevent weeks of serious illness.

The flu vaccine will not give you flu.

Flu vaccines do not protect against colds and other flu-like illnesses.

What do I need to do next?

If you are an adult in a risk group you can be vaccinated at your GP surgery or at some community pharmacies. If you work in health or social care ask your employer. Care home staff should talk to their community pharmacist.

If your child is in a risk group, or in the age range for routine flu vaccination, you should be contacted by your GP surgery or school nursing service. If you think you might have missed their invitation, contact the school nursing service if your child is primary school aged, or if not in primary school contact their GP surgery.

The flu vaccines for children and those aged 65 and over will become available between September and November, and delivery to practices and community pharmacies will be staggered during this time. This may mean a short wait until the recommended vaccine is available.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.beatflu.org

You can find out more about flu vaccines, including vaccine contents and potential side effects, at www.medicines.org.uk/emc by entering the name of the vaccine in the search box and looking at the patient information leaflet (PIL).

Information on reporting suspected side effects can be found online at www.yellowcard.gov.uk or call the Yellow Card hotline on 0808 100 3352 (Monday to Friday 10:00-14:00)

A schedule showing which immunisations are routinely offered in Wales is available from www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/Leaflets

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit www.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 <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights>

To order more copies of this leaflet visit www.publichealthwales.org/HealthInformationResources



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