



5 December 2017

Christmas is coming: don't let flu spoil it

Are you the parent of a two or three year old child? NHS England says there is still time to make an appointment with your GP for the free flu vaccination.

The vaccine comes in the form of a simple nasal spray for young children, which is pain free, quick and effective. This year, all GPs are giving the free vaccine to children aged two and three years old.

Dr Ardiana Gjini, Screening and Immunisations Lead in Bath & North East Somerset, Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire said:

“With Christmas less than a month away, now is a good time to get your children vaccinated. Children can become very poorly if they catch flu, sometimes even causing serious illness.

Flu in children also poses a significant impact on the wider family, as parents/guardians may have to take time off work to look after them.

The nasal spray vaccine helps children to build up immunity against flu.

The flu vaccine is different every year, because the flu viruses change every year. It's crucial to get all children vaccinated ahead of every winter season, even if they had the flu vaccination the previous year. The flu vaccine provides the best protection against the strains of flu that are likely to circulate this year and which may be different from last year.”

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children causing fever, head ache, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and extreme tiredness. This can often last several days. Some children can get a very high fever, sometimes

without the usual flu symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment. Serious complications of flu include mid ear infections, acute bronchitis and so if your child is age two or three please make sure you visit your GP to have them receive the nasal spray as soon as you can. Children who became 4yrs old on or after the 1st September 2017 can also get the flu vaccination from their doctor. If you have school aged children in reception or in years one, two, three and four they are also eligible for the free flu vaccination so please complete the consent form sent by their school for them to receive the vaccination there.

ENDS

Editors Notes:

1. This year, the flu vaccine is being offered to:
 - children aged two and three years
 - children in school years Reception, 1, 2, 3 and 4
 - All other children with a health condition (such as severe asthma) that puts them at greater risk from flu
2. Many GP Practices hold large flu vaccination clinics. It is best to find out dates and times by checking on Practice websites or by telephoning the Practice direct.
3. Further information for kidney patients is available via the NHS Choices website at: <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/child-flu-vaccine.aspx>
4. For further information or to arrange interviews, please get in touch with the NHS England Communications Team on 01138249226 or email: anya.sitaram@nhs.net
5. Short [film](#) on 2-3 year olds and flu vaccination
6. NHS England is an independent non departmental public body. Working in partnership with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other stakeholders, it secures better outcomes for patients, promotes the rights and standards guaranteed by the NHS Constitution and ensures that the health and social care system operates within the resources available. NHS England leads the commissioning system to provide national consistency in areas like quality, safety, access and value for money, whilst promoting the autonomy of CCGs to make decisions that are in the best interests of their communities. NHS England directly commissions some specialised services, primary care services, healthcare for people in the justice system and services for members of the armed forces and public health services. www.england.nhs.uk
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