

Flu vaccination: increasing uptake

Information for the public

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Flu vaccination: protecting people at serious risk from flu

Flu is a common winter illness that most people recover from quickly. But it can lead to complications and make some people seriously ill. These include older people, people with a health condition like heart or lung disease, and pregnant women. It can also cause problems for people with a weakened immune system, for example because of HIV or cancer treatment. Each year, on average 8,000 people die from flu. A free flu jab is available for people whose health is most at risk, but not everyone who can have it takes up this offer.

We want this guideline to help protect people who have the highest risk of serious illness from flu by making sure:

- everyone who can have the free flu jab knows about it and is invited for it
- people are encouraged to have it whenever they see a health or social care professional
- people know the flu jab is safe and understand how important it is to protect themselves, and others around them
- it is easy to get the flu jab by offering it more widely (including at local pharmacies) and at convenient times, like evenings and weekends.

Making decisions together

Decisions about healthcare, including flu vaccination, are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professional should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

[NHS Choices](#) has more information about flu vaccination.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Age UK](#), 0800 055 6112
- [British Lung Foundation](#), 03000 030 555
- [Tommy's](#), 0800 0147 800
- [Terrence Higgins Trust](#), 0808 802 1221
- [British Heart Foundation](#), 0300 330 3311
- [Cancer Research UK](#), 0300 123 1022

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by flu and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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