

WINTER FLU VACCINATIONS



Flu is a highly infectious illness caused by the flu virus. It spreads rapidly through small droplets coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person. Some people are at



WATCH YOUR HEALTH

greater risk of developing serious complications of flu, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. The flu vaccination is offered to people in at-risk groups by the NHS.

The flu jab: Flu vaccination by injection, commonly known as the "flu jab" is available every year on the NHS to protect adults (and some children) at risk of flu and its complications. Flu can be unpleasant, but if you are otherwise healthy it will usually clear up on its own within a week. However, flu can be more severe in certain people, such as:

- anyone over the age of 65
- pregnant women
- children and adults with an underlying health condition (particularly long-term heart or respiratory disease) or weakened immune systems

Anyone in these risk groups is more likely to develop potentially serious complications of flu, such as pneumonia (a lung infection), so it's recommended that they have a flu vaccine every year to protect them.

How the flu jab helps: Studies have shown that the flu jab does work and will help prevent you getting the flu. It won't stop all flu viruses and the level of protection may vary between people, so it's not a 100% guarantee that you'll be flu-free, but if you do get flu after vaccination it's likely to be milder and shorter-lived than it would otherwise have been. There is also evidence to suggest that the flu jab can reduce your risk of having a stroke*.

Over time, protection from the injected flu vaccine gradually decreases and flu strains often change. So new flu vaccines are produced each year which is why people advised to have the flu jab need it each year.

Flu jab side effects: Serious side effects of the injected flu vaccine are very rare. You may have a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days after having the jab, and your arm may be a bit sore where you were injected. Most adults can have the injected flu vaccine, but you should avoid it if you have had a serious allergic reaction to a flu jab in the past.

When to have a flu jab: The best time to have a flu vaccine is in the autumn, from the beginning of October to early November, but don't worry if you've missed it, you can have the vaccine later in winter if there are stocks left.

The flu jab for 2014/15: Each year, the viruses that are most likely to cause flu are identified in advance and vaccines are made to match them as closely as possible. The vaccines are recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The 2014/15 vaccine protects against three types of flu virus. This year's flu jab protects against:

- **H1N1** – the strain of flu that caused the swine flu pandemic in 2009
- **H3N2** – a strain of flu that can infect birds and mammals and was active in 2011
- **B/Massachusetts/2** – a strain of flu that was active in 2012



Even if you are not in one of the risk groups you can still obtain the flu jab from many local pharmacies or your own GP. *If you decide you want to have the flu jab and are not entitled to it free of charge **CEMEX will reimburse the cost up to a maximum of £20 on production of an itemised receipt.** To get reimbursed see your line manager who will complete the process for you Note to Managers: The form for processing reimbursements is available on the SHIFT Health Community.*

*<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx> (17.09.2014)

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