

4 November 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

Protecting your child against flu this winter

As we approach winter we have already started to see cases of flu in the community and in nurseries and schools. Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children and may cause symptoms of a fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and extreme tiredness. Symptoms can last several days or more. Some children can get a very high fever ([High temperature \(fever\) in children - NHS](#)), sometimes without the other usual flu symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment. Serious complications of flu include a painful ear infection, acute bronchitis, and pneumonia.

The best way to protect your child from flu is by them having the **flu nasal spray**. All children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2022 (born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2020) are eligible. You should have received an invitation to make an appointment from your GP surgery. If you have not received an invite, please contact the surgery as soon as possible.

Benefits of your child having the flu nasal spray

- Having the flu nasal spray will help protect your child from what can be a very nasty illness in children.
- Children under the age of 5 years have high rates of hospital admissions due to flu.
- It can help you avoid having to take time off work or other activities because you are ill or need to look after your sick child.
- It will reduce the chance of others in your family who could be at greater risk from flu, such as grandparents or those with long term health conditions, catching flu from your child.
- It is also important because many people at risk from flu are also vulnerable to the complications of COVID-19 and research shows that if you get both flu and COVID-19 at the same time you may become more seriously ill, therefore your child having the flu nasal spray will reduce the risk of passing flu to those vulnerable to complications.

Side effects

Children may develop a runny or blocked nose, headache, general tiredness and some loss of appetite. However, these are much less serious than developing flu or complications associated with flu. The flu nasal spray is safe and usually well tolerated and has been given to millions of children worldwide and has an excellent safety record.

How can your child get the flu nasal spray?

The flu nasal spray is given at your GP practice, usually by a practice nurse. Please call your GP practice to book an appointment as soon as you can, don't wait for them to contact you.

Does the flu nasal spray contain animal products?

The flu nasal spray contains a highly processed form of gelatine (porcine gelatine), which is used in a range of many essential medicines. The gelatine helps to keep the vaccine stable so that it provides the best protection. For those who may not accept the use of porcine gelatine, an alternative injectable vaccine is available. Please speak to your practice nurse or GP if you have any questions.

Additional information or advice

- For more information about the flu nasal spray please visit here [Protect your child against flu – information for parents and carers of children in primary school or pre-school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Child flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- If your child has an allergy, please speak to your GP or practice nurse to see if the flu nasal spray is suitable for your child.
- If you have any questions not answered in the information above please contact your practice nurse who will be happy to help.

With kind regards,



Gerry Taylor

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities
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